

# System Change for Climate Change?

*Understanding climate change adaptation  
mainstreaming within the European Union's  
development cooperation*

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*For my parents*  
*They would have been proud.*

# Preface

Well, I dreamed I saw the silver  
    Space ships flying  
In the yellow haze of the sun,  
    There were children crying  
    And colors flying  
All around the chosen ones.  
All in a dream, all in a dream  
    The loading had begun.  
They were flying Mother Nature's  
Silver seed to a new home in the sun.  
    Flying Mother Nature's  
Silver seed to a new home.

--

Look at Mother Nature on the run  
    In the nineteen-seventies.

*From Neil Young, After the Gold Rush (1970)*

'After the Gold Rush' was one of the very first songs by a major artist that dealt specifically with environmental themes. It was released in 1970 and reflected a growing international sentiment of stewardship towards 'Mother Nature' in light of several environmental problems that we only just started to fathom. All of which were a direct consequence of the steep rise of consumerism and industrial expansion after the Second World War, depicted by Young as a contemporary gold rush. The lyrics to the song depict a post-apocalyptic scene, in which a group of 'chosen ones' and 'silver seeds' is launched into outer space, with the aim of establishing a new colony in order to save mankind from imminent environmental destruction. In hindsight, the song was a definite requiem for the idealistic 1960s, and a prelude to many of the environmental problems that would manifest themselves in the following years and decades.

In the 48 years that have passed since the song was released, Neil Young has altered the lyrics to the song on several occasions. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, climate change quickly became known as one of the most pressing global issues of our time. New scientific and political structures were erected, international agreements were forged, but little changed in terms of halting the warming of our planet. Neil Young was thus forced to alter his lyrics in order to reflect this stalemate:

*Look at Mother Nature on the run*

*In the twentieth century*

The twenty-first century began, and Neil Young slowly became the 'old man' he described so tellingly on his album *Harvest*. On two separate occasions, he saw his government withdraw from international agreements that were created to put a stop to climate change. He saw the rise of new international powers like China and India. Countries that aspire the same level of welfare as their Western counterparts, and quite possibly also the same level of consumption. He saw the first signs of climate change manifesting itself in the intensifying pace and impact of various natural disasters that devastated different parts of his country. Once again, he witnessed all of this, and was forced to alter his lyrics accordingly:

*Look at Mother Nature on the run*

*In the twenty-first century*

I myself, being 27 years old, am considerably younger than Neil Young. Yet, I can already say that throughout my entire lifespan, there have been international negotiations taking place with the goal of designing concrete policies in order to prevent climate change from growing worse, and in order to help countries within the Global South to adapt to its effects. If the urgency inherent to climate change would have been reflected in the speed and ambition of international policy making, this PhD would have been redundant a very long time ago. Yet, here we are. It's 2018, and Mother Nature is still on the run.

Being optimistic does not come naturally for me, which might explain the pessimistic tone of the above paragraphs. Yet, there have been some reasons for cautious optimism in the last four years, both in terms of political evolutions and evolutions on a more personal level. Despite the coming of a blond-'haired' (the brackets are intentional), notoriously climate-sceptic president in the White House, climate awareness is higher than ever. The 2015 Paris agreement brought a renewed international can-do attitude towards tackling the problem once and for all. Although it is clear by now that agreeing upon it was much easier than implementing it, I am still hopeful that the Paris Agreement will indeed cause the international community to make drastic decisions in order to tackle climate change and to generate goodwill and financing to help the most vulnerable countries in adapting to its effects.

Personally, these four years were also a fantastic growth process. This despite all the times I thought I was not right for the job and would never be able to finish it, all the times when I came home thinking I had wasted yet another day scanning through articles searching for ideas, and all the times I was unable to give a satisfactory answer to the most common question of all from people with a non-academic background for PhD students: "So what do you *do* exactly?" Despite the occasional personal crisis and some severe cases of imposter syndrome, I did have a lot of fun in the end. I became more engaged myself by becoming a vegetarian and by trying to actively promote vegetarianism within the walls of our university. I had the chance to teach and give

lectures on international climate change politics, in which I always tried to transmit both academic insights as well as a sense of activism and moral indignation. I really hope that, just as I quite suddenly became aware of the magnitude of climate change during a class on the topic in my Master's year, I too have inspired some people to become more climate-aware and to live a bit more sustainably themselves. Although teaching was only a minor part of my activities, I have always considered this at least as important as the writing process.

Of course, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by some truly inspiring people, both within the Centre for EU Studies as well as outside of it. First and foremost, there are simply not enough words in any language to describe how important Laura has been to me throughout this entire process, and in my entire life for that matter. No matter how gloomy my mood or how endless my rants on whatever it is I rant about, you have always been there for me and made me into someone better than I could have ever been without you. I would need an infinite amount of lifetimes to thank you enough for just being who you are, for putting up with me, and for being the best possible partner to come home to. I love you and I will spend the rest of my life trying to make you happy, because you deserve nothing less.

I would also like to thank some family members and people who have become like family to me over the years. Sebastian, Marleen & Patrick: I cannot thank you enough for being a factor of stability, friendship and genuine kindness in times when I needed it the most. When everything seemed to be falling apart, you guys were there and helped me to get back on my feet with something as simple as a weekly Tuesday night get-together. I will forever be grateful for that. My (unofficial) parents-in-law Marthe & Julien: thank you first of all for raising such a beautiful daughter, and for being among the nicest and most hospitable people I have ever met. Mathias, Joris and Yannick: we have been through a lot together, and I am grateful that we have pulled through and got out stronger in the end. Special thanks to Mathias for a lot of interesting discussions over the years and for inspiring me to study political sciences in the first place. And of course also a big thank you for proofreading my concluding chapter.

My friends: I could go on for several pages thanking each of you individually, but you probably all know who you are and what you mean to me. Thank you for being a constant source of inspiration in my personal life. Special thanks to Koenraad for proofreading my introductory chapter, for introducing me to some really interesting academic work, and for spicing up several Cieters-parties with interesting discussions. I look forward to reading your PhD!

My office of sunshine co-workers, who also became friends over the course of these last four years: I could not have wished for better colleagues than you guys. Thank you for creating a nice, humorous and at times slightly crazy (Bop-it!) working environment. Sarah and Jan: thank you for gently pushing me over the course of these four years to always go the extra mile. From discussing my PhD proposal to commenting on my concluding chapter, you guided me through the process with support, professional advice, countless pages of feedback and a lot of interesting discussions. Thank you so much for believing in me. Special thanks to Yelter for using his artistic talents (just one of many) to create the cover artwork for this dissertation. And of course a big thanks to all of my CEUS-colleagues with whom I shared the office over the course of these four years. Thank you for constantly inspiring me, challenging me, pursuing me to walk 100 kilometers and for being a genuinely nice bunch of people. I had a blast ☺.

Finally, I am grateful to all my interviewees for making time for me and providing me with many of the insights that in the end lead to this dissertation. Also special thanks to the jury for reading this dissertation so carefully, and for all your interesting and constructive comments and feedback.

On with the show!

Frederik

One extremely hot summer day

Ghent, August 2018

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# List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
CBDR	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEP	Country Environmental Profile
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPI	Climate policy integration
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENRTP	Environment and Natural Resources Thematic Programme
EPI	Environmental policy integration
ETS	Emission Trading System
EU	European Union
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GPGC	Global Public Goods and Challenges
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFF	Multi-Annual Financial Framework
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MRV	Measuring, Reporting & Verification
NAP	National Adaptation Planning
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NPE	Normative Power Europe
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REDD	Reducing Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

# Summary

## English summary

This PhD dissertation aims to assess the *mainstreaming* of climate change adaptation in the development cooperation efforts of the European Union (EU). Adaptation and aid activities are inherently interlinked for three reasons: (i) the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries, (ii) the potentially negative impact of climate change on poverty reduction efforts and (iii) the role development cooperation can play in reducing vulnerability to climate change. Integrating or mainstreaming climate change in aid activities is the prime response of aid donors in order to address these linkages.

Approaching the nexus between climate change adaptation and development cooperation from multiple theoretical angles, this dissertation aims to generate a pluralistic and multi-faceted understanding of this integration process. More specifically, the two main perspectives that guide this dissertation are an institutionalist approach and a critical approach towards the nexus. Regarding the former, **article 1** draws from the literature on environmental- and climate policy integration (EPI and CPI) in order to assess how and to what extent climate change adaptation is mainstreamed in the current development policy cycle (2014-2020). Regarding the latter, article 2 and 3 are aimed at problematizing this integration exercise by looking specifically at the power effects encapsulated in the discursive representation of climate change as a challenge for development cooperation, as well as in the concrete policy techniques that are being used in this regard. In **article 2**, this is pursued by employing a critical frame analysis in order to analyze the discourse surrounding the climate-development nexus within the EU. In **article 3**, I use a governmentality perspective to problematize the discursive constructions and policy techniques employed within the EU's thematic agency for providing adaptation assistance towards its partner countries in the Global South: the Global Climate Change Alliance.

All three articles point to a mainstreaming rationale in which adaptation is *retrofitted* in EU development cooperation, ignoring its transformational potential in aid activities. Discursively, adaptation is framed within the parameters of existing development paradigms, such as security and economic growth. Moreover, the responsibility for change in this regard is almost entirely projected upon EU partner countries. Third, mainstreaming is also predominantly imagined and pursued in a top-down fashion, in which meaning and implementation modalities are transposed from HQ-level towards EU delegations and partner countries alike. These political underpinnings of adaptation mainstreaming generate an institutional reality in which adaptation is 'just another requirement' within EU delegations, to be implemented through procedural and organizational adjustments. However, capacity is lacking in order to elevate adaptation mainstreaming to a level in which it could evoke a system change in development cooperation.

## Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Dit onderzoek behandelt het *mainstreamen* van klimaatadaptatie in de ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsactiviteiten van de Europese Unie (EU). Klimaatadaptatie en ontwikkelingssamenwerking zijn inherent verbonden met elkaar omwille van de volgende drie redenen: (i) ontwikkelingslanden zullen disproportioneel blootgesteld worden aan de gevolgen van klimaatverandering, (ii) klimaatverandering kan ook een negatieve impact hebben op armoedebestrijding en (iii) ontwikkelingssamenwerking heeft een belangrijke rol te spelen in het verminderen van klimaatkwetsbaarheid. De integratie of *mainstreaming* van klimaatadaptatie in ontwikkelingsactiviteiten is dan ook de belangrijkste manier waarop donoren gehoor proberen te geven aan deze uitdaging.

Door de nexus tussen klimaatadaptatie en ontwikkelingssamenwerking te benaderen vanuit verschillende theoretische invalshoeken probeer ik een pluralistisch en veelzijdig beeld te schetsen van dit integratieproces. De twee dominante theoretische perspectieven die gehanteerd worden in dit onderzoek zijn institutioneel en kritisch van aard. **Artikel 1** valt binnen het institutionele luik en baseert zich hoofdzakelijk op de literatuur omtrent *environmental-* en *climate policy integration* (EPI en CPI). Vanuit

deze theoretische invalshoek wordt de manier waarop en de mate waarin klimaatadaptatie wordt geïntegreerd in de huidige beleidscyclus (2014-2020) binnen de Europese ontwikkelingssamenwerking onderzocht. Het kritische luik bestaat uit twee artikels. Beiden zijn erop gericht om dit integratieproces te problematiseren door specifiek te kijken naar de machtheffingen die vervat zitten in de discursieve representatie van klimaatadaptatie binnen het Europees ontwikkelingsdiscours én naar de concrete beleidstechnieken die in dit kader gebruikt worden. In **artikel 2** wordt een *critical frame* analyse gebruikt om het discours omtrent de klimaatontwikkelingsnexus binnen de EU te bestuderen. In **artikel 3** gebruik ik een *governmentality* perspectief om de discursieve constructies en beleidstechnieken te problematiseren die gebruikt worden binnen het Europees thematisch agentschap dat instaat voor adaptatie-gerelateerde hulp in ontwikkelingslanden: de zogenaamde *Global Climate Change Alliance*.

De drie artikels wijzen op een mainstreaming logica waarbij de Europese ontwikkelingssamenwerking rekening houdt met klimaatadaptatie, maar waarbij het transformatieve potentieel van adaptatie wordt genegeerd. Qua discours wordt adaptatie geframed binnen de parameters van bestaande ontwikkelingsparadigma's, zoals veiligheid en economische groei. Daarnaast wordt de verantwoordelijkheid voor verandering grotendeels afgeschoven op partnerlanden. Ten derde wordt mainstreaming ook vooral benaderd vanuit een top-down logica, waarin zowel betekenis als implementatiemodaliteiten getransponeerd worden vanuit Brussel naar EU delegaties en partnerlanden. Deze politieke onderbouwing van adaptatie mainstreaming creëren een institutionele realiteit waarin adaptatie een 'zoveelste vereiste' is dat moet worden geïmplementeerd via procedures en organisatorische aanspanningen binnen EU delegaties. De capaciteit om adaptatie mainstreaming naar een niveau te brengen waarop het een systeemverandering binnen ontwikkeling kan veroorzaken ontbreekt echter.

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# Introduction

## 1. Structure of the introduction

This introduction aims to provide the reader with the necessary background in order to fully grasp the three research articles constituting this dissertation, as well as to further explain the overall research design and research questions that have steered this research. First of all, **section 2** starts by outlining the basics of the climate-development nexus. This includes (i) a short historical trajectory of how this nexus was established within international climate change and development governance, (ii) an exploration of how climate change is interlinked with development assistance, (iii) an elaboration on why this dissertation focuses specifically on climate change *adaptation* in the context of development cooperation and (iv) an overview of the evolution of the climate-development nexus within the EU. **Section 3** introduces the two main theoretical approaches used within this dissertation: an institutionalist perspective, based on the concepts of environmental- and climate policy integration, and a critical perspective, incorporating both a framing- and a governmentality approach to the climate-development nexus. Finally, **section 4** is dedicated to outlining the methodology and methods used within this dissertation.

## 2. Introducing the climate-development nexus

This section is dedicated to outlining the basic context in which this PhD dissertation is situated: the nexus between climate change and development cooperation. First of all, I will provide a short historical oversight of its inception by describing how climate change as a policy problem became entangled with the concept of development and development cooperation. Second, I will explore the linkages between climate change and development cooperation in order to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the imperative behind the idea of integrating climate change in aid activities of donors. Finally, I will end this section by describing the evolution of the climate-development nexus within the context of the European Union.

### 2.1 A tale of two regimes

Climate change is not a new phenomenon. The biochemical process that invokes the so-called greenhouse gas effect was already identified in the 19th century. However, the problem remained somewhat in the margin until 1979, when the first World Climate Conference took place (Gupta 2010a). This sparked an evolution in which climate change would be translated from a purely 'scientific' problem, to a complex and interlinked policy challenge on a global scale, often labeled with the term 'wicked problem' (Levin et al. 2012). The pinnacle of this evolution from a purely scientific problem to a science-based policy issue was the 1987 World Conference on Environment and Development. The report that followed from this conference – entitled 'Our Common Future', yet commonly referred to as the Brundtland report – for the very first time articulated the concept of 'sustainable development'. In what would later become a landmark definition, sustainable development was described as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987).

Apart from introducing the concept of sustainable development, the Brundtland report also further cemented the links between environmental degradation and climate change on the one hand, and the political, social and economic aspects of societal development on the other. Thus, sustainable development allowed for long-term policy planning to take environmental and climate-related impacts into account.

Later on, however, the concept would effectively become a leitmotif for a wide variety of policy domains. As a result, its conceptual limits are stretched to such an extent that its initial potential for generating sensibility for environmental- and climate issues has become increasingly overshadowed by alternative conceptions (see for example Redclift 2005). Recently, a similar critique was formulated in the process of creating the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to these accounts, its broad focus on seventeen individual goals runs the risk of over-stretching the concept of sustainable development to the point where they are no longer governable. In the words of Easterly (2015), “the SDGs are so encyclopedic that everything is top priority, which means nothing is a priority”.

With the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 and the 1992 UN Earth Summit, the international architecture for governing climate change as we know it today took shape. While the former serves as a scientific pillar, providing the basis for policy makers to develop policies for both climate change mitigation and adaptation through influential reports on long-term projections of the consequences of climate change, the latter established the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Over the years, the UNFCCC became the pinnacle of the international climate change regime. For one, it introduced a platform for global negotiations on mitigating the escalation of climate change and to a lesser extent on adapting to the consequences it invokes. Even more interesting for the purpose of this dissertation is the fact that it divided the world in Annex I countries – consisting out of ‘developed’ or industrialized nations, responsible for causing climate change through their historical emissions – and non-Annex 1 countries – consisting mostly out of developing<sup>1</sup> countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDs), which have little or no responsibility in causing climate change, but are most vulnerable to its effects (Gupta 2010a; UNFCCC 2018). From the onset of UNFCCC activities, Annex 1 countries promised leadership in tackling climate change, through decreasing their

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<sup>1</sup> In lack of a better catch-all term, I will often refer to ‘developing countries’ throughout this PhD. I am however fully aware of the pejorative connotations this term harbours and I want to emphasize that I by no means want to reproduce the power imbalances that might be implied through its use.

own emissions and by providing financial and technical assistance towards non-Annex 1 countries to ensure their right to sustainable development. This setup became known under the concept of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (cf. Brunnée & Streck 2013).

Hence, the idea of climate change and development being interlinked concepts was already inscribed in the early conceptions of climate change as a political problem, through the concept of sustainable development and the principle of CBDR. Despite anchoring these principles in the very foundations of the international climate change regime, tensions between industrialized and non-industrialized countries on what this right to sustainable development exactly entails have become common in UNFCCC negotiations. Historically, developing countries have continuously emphasized the need for equity in global climate governance by reiterating the need for adequate transfers of financial and – to a lesser extent – technical resources (Morgan & Waskow 2014). Over the years, this has led to a plethora of different instruments in order to operationalize these guiding principles. Examples are plentiful, and include market-based flexibility mechanisms (such as the Clean Development Mechanism, initiated under the Kyoto Protocol) as well as international funds like the Global Environmental Fund, the Adaptation Fund and – more recently – the Green Climate Fund.

Despite a growing international architecture for climate-related financial and technological assistance towards the South, tensions remain. For one, the principle of CBDR became increasingly contested over the years, partially due to new rising economies (like China and India) operating within a ‘grey zone’. Under the Kyoto Protocol, their non-Annex 1 statute exempted them from any emission reduction obligations, while their rapid economic growth caused the CO<sub>2</sub> intensity of their economies to surge (Kasa et al. 2008). Hence, under the Paris Agreement – as agreed upon in 2015 – the Annex 1/non-Annex 1 dichotomy was replaced by a system of voluntary contributions (cf. Falkner 2016). Every country now specifies its own mitigation and adaptation targets through so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). As this system no longer differentiates between countries

based on their status as a (non-) industrialized country, the Paris agreement has erased the explicit Annex 1/non-Annex 1 divide in international climate negotiations.

Yet, notwithstanding this observation that a clear-cut demarcation between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries can be considered a thing of the past under the Paris Agreement, debates on climate equity within UNFCCC are more salient than ever (Chan & Mogelgaard 2017). At COP15 in Copenhagen, parties agreed that from 2020 onwards, financial compensations for climate change should amount to 100 billion dollars per year (Buchner et al. 2011). However, due to an incredibly complicated institutional landscape – including endless amounts of both public and private sources of climate financing – and ongoing debates on the additionality<sup>2</sup> of climate finance in relation to Official Development Assistance (ODA), the question remains whether the international community will actually achieve this target (see for example Roberts & Weikmans 2017). Hence, recent negotiating rounds were characterized by developing countries asking for more clarity and assurances in this regard.

In addition to sustainable development becoming a fundamental building block of the international climate change regime, it also emerged as a leitmotif for international development cooperation. Interestingly, despite sustainable development establishing firm linkages between climate change and development, both regimes developed separately for a considerable amount of time (Huq et al. 2006). According to Wapner (2003), one explanation for this is developing countries being particularly wary of limiting their scope for industrialization and economic development in the wake of climate- and environmental concerns. These concerns go far back: for example, at the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, developing countries already warned that their entitlement towards the same levels of economic growth as

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of ‘additionality’ stems from the principle embedded within the international climate regime that financial resources provided from industrialized countries towards their non-industrialized counterparts in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change should be ‘new and additional’ (UNCTAD 2015). This implies that the former group of countries cannot simply re-convert ODA-streams in order to fulfil their obligations in this regard. However, the exact definition of additionality, and thus the relation between climate financing and ODA, is still widely debated. I will return to this discussion in the concluding remarks.

industrialized countries might be hampered by an emerging threat of 'environmental neocolonialism' (Linnér & Selin 2013: 979). Hence, integrating climate change in ODA was also seen as bearing the risk of diverging already limited ODA-funding to climate-related activities, at the expense of poverty reduction efforts and socio-economic development (Klein 2010).

Hence, until the early 2000s, linking climate change and development cooperation remained a somewhat marginal policy issue. Although the 1990s marked a shift from a development rationale based on overtly neoliberal development recipes towards a so-called 'human' development paradigm, including a broader conception of poverty as being linked to – among others – gender issues and environmental degradation (Doidge & Holland 2015), climate change initially fell outside this paradigm shift. This was strongly apparent in the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in which climate change was a non-issue, largely because certain actors opposed the inclusion of climate change as a challenge for development (Fankhauser & Schmidt-Traub 2011).

Despite climate change falling largely outside the overarching framework of the MDGs, the international salience of the climate-development nexus did eventually gain pace. The 2002 World Conference on Sustainable Development (also known as Rio +10) reaffirmed the impact of wicked problems like environmental degradation and climate change on poverty reduction efforts. Second, a number of major donors released a paper on poverty and climate change at the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP8) in 2002, which firmly stated that "climate change is a serious risk to poverty reduction and threatens to undo decades of development efforts" (Huq et al. 2006: 9). The early 2000s also saw an increasing attention towards the climate-development nexus from both academic circles as well as policy think tanks, leading to major donor agencies (e.g. the EU, the World Bank and the OECD) to fully acknowledge this link and to consider the 'mainstreaming' of climate change as good development practice (ibid.).

In recent years, the link between climate change, sustainable development and development cooperation has been internationally cemented in the new overarching framework for international development cooperation, being the SDGs. The SDGs specifically aim to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (United Nations 2015: 13), and explicitly link the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the Paris Agreement and the NDCs. Hence, the fact that both international regimes are coming together through these overlapping functionalities indicates that the climate-development nexus is becoming increasingly anchored internationally. Moreover, although often criticized (cf. *supra*), its holistic aspirations and structuration of the goals also show promising signs in terms of policy coherence and mainstreaming cross-cutting development issues (like climate change) in sectoral aid activities (Le Blanc 2015).

Having outlined the increasing entanglement of the international regimes for climate change and development cooperation, the question remains how both concepts influence and impact each other. Therefore, the following section is dedicated to consulting the literature in order to outline the interlinkages between development cooperation, climate change mitigation and adaptation<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.2 Linking climate change and development cooperation

It is worthwhile to note that the growing body of literature in this regard deals with two separate aspects of climate change as a development challenge: mitigating further climate change and adapting to its consequences. First of all, scholarly work on **mitigation** to climate change can be further categorized as focusing on (i) integrating climate mitigation in development activities and (ii) linking development cooperation to international mitigation mechanisms. The former deals specifically with the pursuit of so-called ‘green growth’ in the Global South. At the risk of over-generalizing, most of the knowledge in this regard deals with the role development aid can play in avoiding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by providing support in energy or transport sectors (Kok et

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<sup>3</sup> **Mitigation** is defined by the IPCC as “An anthropogenic intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases”, while **adaptation** is defined as “Adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities” (IPCC 2007).

al. 2008). For example, development assistance can play a role in reducing emissions through applying clean technologies in a country's energy facilities, or by supporting the transition to renewable energy systems altogether (ibid.; Kruckenberg 2015; Marquardt et al. 2016). Regarding transport, development cooperation can play a role by for example supporting and maintaining public transport systems. In their turn, such improvements in a country's energy infrastructure can create co-benefits for development, such as new employment opportunities, enhanced infrastructure and increased energy security (Kok et al. 2008).

Alternatively, some mitigation-oriented studies focus specifically on some newly created global market mechanisms aimed at emission mitigation in the Global South. Under the Kyoto Protocol, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was introduced as one of three 'flexibility mechanisms', with the specific aim of establishing a market-based cooperation mechanism for emission reductions between Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries. In short, companies within Annex 1 countries could acquire emission reduction offsets by investing in climate mitigation projects in non-Annex 1 countries (Streck 2004). This mechanism was presented as a win-win opportunity for both sides involved, providing an opportunity for Annex 1 countries to achieve their quantified emission targets, while also supporting sustainable development in non-Annex 1 countries (ibid.; Minang et al. 2007). The role of development cooperation in this regard was mainly envisaged in terms of building the capacity of actors in non-Annex 1 countries in order to implement CDM-related projects (Minang et al. 2007; Michaelowa & Michaelowa 2006). However, the CDM arguably never lived up to its initial expectations, and was frequently criticized for mainly targeting middle-income countries and therefore failing to achieve any meaningful sustainable development in countries which could most benefit from its support (Michaelowa & Michaelowa 2006).

Another example of an international market mechanism for mitigation in the Global South is the so-called Reducing Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) initiative. In essence, this mechanism aims to financially incentivize these countries in preserving and protecting forest resources, in order to benefit from their



mitigation potential as carbon sinks (Somorin et al. 2014). Once again, this UNFCCC-initiated carbon offsetting scheme became increasingly entangled with development cooperation to the extent that international funding for REDD+ projects now mainly comes from ODA (Angelsen 2013). As a result, REDD+ evolved from being a mechanism solely aimed at providing payments for ecosystem services of forests, to a tool that pursues a broader development-based agenda. Nowadays, its goals also include protecting biodiversity, reducing poverty and enhancing livelihoods in the Global South (Angelsen 2013: 3). Thus, REDD+ activities increasingly made the connection between international development assistance on the one hand, and international mitigation initiatives under UNFCCC on the other hand.

Apart from the pursuit of mitigation objectives through development cooperation, a bulking strand of research also looked into the link between **adaptation** to climate change and international development assistance. Indeed, it has become a well-known fact that developing countries will generally be impacted the most by the effects of climate change. Based on their geographical position, these countries are inherently more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The intensification of climate variability through climate change is therefore expected to put additional pressure on already vulnerable societies (Schipper 2007).

However, visions on how development cooperation can play a role in helping societies adapt to the consequences of climate change tend to differ widely. Already in the use of terminology within the literature, this can easily be deduced: scholarly work in this regard not only refers to ‘adapting to climate change’, but also revolves around similar-but-different concepts like climate vulnerability (e.g. Klein & Möhner 2011), adaptive capacity (e.g. Smit & Wandel 2006) and resilience (e.g. McEvoy et al. 2013) to climate impacts. Moreover, the challenge of integrating climate change in development cooperation has also been linked to the concept of disaster risk reduction, which even relates it with the literature on humanitarian aid (Schipper & Pelling 2006).

On the one hand, the literature linking adaptation to disaster risk reduction is more inclined towards ‘technical’ visions of the nexus. The main aim in this regard is to use aid assistance to build capacity for mitigating the physical impacts of extreme weather

events – such as flash floods, prolonged droughts etc. – and to develop hazard forecasting and early warning systems to minimize the impact of such extreme events (cf. Thomalla et al. 2006). Arguably, such visions present a narrow conceptualization of the link between development cooperation and adaptation, focusing solely on the ability of societies to monitor extreme weather phenomena to better anticipate on their effects. Related to these technical conceptions is the fairly recent concept of ecosystem-based adaptation, which is mainly preoccupied with ecosystems and biodiversity in relation to building adaptive capacity (Wamsler 2015).

On the other hand, broader conceptions of the nexus tend to also look at socio-economic determinants of adaptation and adaptive capacity (Adger et al. 2003). Often, such studies start from the concept of ‘vulnerability’ and incorporate a wider perspective on what precisely renders societies vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Thus, these conceptions incorporate a broad range of sectoral activities in which development cooperation can play a role in terms of adaptation. These range from more ‘obvious’ sectoral activities which are still linked to ecosystem services and natural resource management (e.g. sustainable agriculture) to more political and societal interpretations of the concept. Such conceptions are aimed at understanding the unequal distribution of climate impacts within societies, thus perceiving adaptation as tackling vulnerabilities already inscribed in socio-economic processes (O’Brien et al. 2004; Yamin et al. 2005: 4). Ayers & Huq (2009) provide the example of ensuring water rights to different societal groups when confronted with climate change-induced droughts. This goes beyond a mere technical response – such as installing early warning systems in order to anticipate such droughts – and focus on the underlying factors that render people vulnerable in the first place. Some interpretations in this regard therefore consider adaptation to climate change in the context of aid activities as simply pursuing ‘good development’, as an increase in welfare of societies also enhances their adaptive capacity (cf. Cannon & Müller-Mahn 2010). Others go even further and tend to perceive adaptation in terms of enhancing well-being and reducing socio-economic inequalities within societies. Such interpretations are arguably more ‘transformative’ for development aid, as they are

able to alter the classic development paradigm, focused on poverty reduction and economic growth (ibid.).

This initial exploration of the literature on the link between adaptation and development is by no means exhaustive, as there are far more variables that are subjected to different interpretations. Questions like on what level adaptation should be pursued and how to integrate long-term perspectives and potential uncertainties in adaptation policy also continue to stir debate within a growing body of scholarly work. Moreover, these different conceptions should not be perceived – and generally do not perceive each other – as mutually exclusive. Many studies recognize that their work is but a part of a broader effort aimed at using development aid to help countries prepare for the consequences of climate change. However, once again, this diversity – of which I have merely scratched the surface – does point out that the relation between adaptation to climate change and development cooperation is indeed a very broad one, and that integrating adaptation in aid assistance is a complex and challenging endeavor.

Within this PhD thesis, I focus specifically on the nexus between adaptation to climate change and development cooperation. The reason for this is twofold: first of all, as the broader conceptions of the adaptation-development nexus already signify, linkages between the climate vulnerability of developing countries and sectoral aid activities are preeminently multi-faceted. This implies that integrating the former into the latter is particularly challenging for donors, arguably even more so than mainstreaming mitigation – which is more confined in terms of sectoral overlaps. Indeed, while mainstreaming mitigation is mostly related to sectoral aid activities in terms of energy security, transport and possibly trade and finance, adaptation touches upon the core of poverty reduction and development cooperation itself (Kok & De Coninck 2007; Lauer & Eguavoen 2016). Therefore, adaptation is expected by some to be “an opportunity for social reform, for the questioning of values that drive inequalities in development and our unsustainable relationship with the environment” (Pelling as cited in Lauer & Eguavoen 2016: 88).

The fundamental interconnection between adaptation and development thus provides the former with a transformative potential in relation to the latter. In other words, adaptation is able to invoke a system change in the conception and pursuit of development, which makes the task of properly integrating it all the more challenging. As apparent in the quote above, transformative adaptation in the context of development is strongly preoccupied with power structures within societies that render them vulnerable to climate change in the first place (cf. Kates et al. 2012; Lauer & Eguavoen 2016). Hence, transformational adaptation focuses strongly on the political-economic drivers of vulnerability to climate change (Bassett & Fogelman 2013). It is based on the belief that people's exposure to the effects of climate change is strongly influenced by their access to resources and decision-making structures within a given societal context. Hence, adaptation responses should strive to generate more equity in this regard, in order to erase the social and structural causes of climate vulnerability (ibid.).

In addition, these different visions on what exactly constitutes mainstreaming adaptation in development cooperation, show that adaptation not only poses challenges in terms of implementing institutional and organizational changes, but also in terms of the meaning that is provided to adaptation as a development challenge. This is the fundamental assumption behind this PhD project, and also implies the use of different theoretical perspectives for the study of the adaptation-development nexus within the EU. Before introducing these theoretical perspectives, I will first proceed by introducing the nexus between climate change and development cooperation within the European Union.

## **2.3 Exploring the nexus within the European Union**

In this section, I will elaborate on the EU as the central actor within this dissertation. More specifically, I provide an overview of how the link between climate change and development cooperation became established within the EU. The normative objective to integrate environmental- and climate concerns in all aspects of development cooperation has been a legal requirement since the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (Adelle et al. 2018). It is explicitly stated here that “environmental protection requirements

must be integrated into the definition and implementation of all the community policies and activities [...] in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development” (European Union 1997: 25).

This legal obligation was further implemented through the Cardiff Process, which led to a first review and report exercise on how to integrate environmental issues in nine policy domains, including development cooperation (Adelle et al. 2018). A first specific communication on assisting developing countries in their fight against climate change was issued in 2003. It contained four distinct policy objectives in this regard: raising the policy profile of climate change (through agenda setting in high level meetings regarding EU development cooperation agreements), supporting adaptation and mitigation efforts, capacity building (regarding impact assessments, coordination between developing countries in international negotiations and the dissemination of relevant knowledge) and monitoring/evaluating the implementation of the Action Plan (European Commission 2003). These objectives were formally confirmed in the European Consensus on Development (2006), which redefined the underlying principles of European aid efforts. In 2011, reducing developing countries’ exposure to climate change and environmental degradation was also included as a key priority in the Agenda for Change, which became the main guiding document for EU development programming (European Commission 2011).

In recent years, the EU re-affirmed its commitment towards mainstreaming climate change on several occasions. For one, the renewed Consensus for Development (2017) re-affirms that “The EU and its Member States will integrate environment and climate change throughout their development cooperation strategies, including by promoting a sound balance between mitigation and adaptation” (European Union 2017: 9). Also considering the negotiations leading up to the new SDGs, the EU took an ambitious stance by emphasizing the need for an approach which enabled environmental policy integration throughout the three dimensions of sustainable development (Adelle et al. 2018).

Institutionally, climate change is to be considered in both the EU's geographical and thematic development instruments. Regarding the former, the two main funding instruments in this regard are the European Development Fund (EDF) – focused on the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries as well as overseas countries and territories – and the Development Cooperation Initiative (DCI) – targeting Latin America, Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf and South Africa (CONCORD 2014). While the DCI is fully funded by the EU budget, the EDF is an intergovernmental instrument funded by member states (ibid.). The integration of climate change within this geographical pillar of EU aid activities is further elaborated upon in **article 1**.

In addition, the EU also established thematic budget lines in order to address climate change in aid activities. Currently, the most important one is the Global Public Goods and Challenges programme (GPGC). It is aimed at supporting the three dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated and holistic way and includes climate change as one of its key areas (European Commission 2014). The GPGC programme was established as a unifying programme in response to the fragmented architecture of EU thematic budget lines on these issues in the previous aid cycle (2007-2012). It is also the main source of funding for multi-dimensional and cross-cutting 'flagship initiatives' (CONCORD 2014). The most relevant initiative for this PhD project is the so-called Global Climate Change Alliance (cf. *infra*). Another recent commitment is to be found within the current Multiannual Financial Framework, in which the EU has pledged to make 20% of its spending climate compatible for the period 2014-2020. According to Adelle et al. (2018: 83) this implies a threefold increase in climate spending within EU aid activities compared to the 2007-2014 period, amounting to a net spending of 14 billion EUR. In article 1, I will further elaborate on what impact this financial incentive has on climate mainstreaming in EU aid activities.

Based on the above, it is safe to say that the salience of climate change as a development issue has grown in recent years. This coincides with the evolution of the EU as an actor within both the international climate change regime and the international development regime. Regarding the former, an important contextual element for this dissertation is the fact that the EU has been perceived (and has perceived itself) as a

leading actor within the international climate change regime ever since the negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol. The literature identifies different sources of EU climate 'leadership', like the creation of ambitious internal policies (e.g. the Emission Trading System), the use of climate diplomacy and the power derived from material sources such as the size of the internal market (Gupta & Ringius 2001; Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013; Kilian & Elgström 2010). Relevant for this research is the observation that this climate leadership role evolved towards what the literature dubs a 'leadator' role in recent years (Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013). This leadership conception implies a stronger emphasis on building diplomatic alliances with other actors and serving as a bridge-builder between industrialized and non-industrialized countries (Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013). For example, the EU has in recent years invested in building diplomatic ties with countries within the Global South through its Green Diplomacy Network, situated within the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Torney & Cross 2018). Moreover, the creation and growth of thematic agencies like the GCCA also show an increasing sensitivity towards issues related to adaptation and climate financing within EU external climate action. As a result of the EU's leadator role and the growing attention towards the impact of climate change in the Global South, development cooperation also becomes an important tool for embodying this increasing awareness. Hence, mainstreaming climate change adaptation in EU aid activities can be considered an important indicator for determining whether this shift towards a leadator role within the UNFCCC regime also trickles down into very concrete forms of policy making.

Regarding the EU's role in the international development regime, we can also perceive this inclusion of 'horizontal issues' to be integrated in EU aid activities as a strife for carving out an EU approach to development. The EU can be considered a peculiar development actor, combining a role as a bilateral donor – appearing as an aid provider in its own regard – and a multilateral donor – being placed 'above' the individual aid efforts of its member states (Carbone 2007). Whereas EU development policy was already set out as a policy area since the 1972 Memorandum on a Community Development Cooperation Policy, it was not until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty that a formal legal framework was established in this regard (van der Grijp et

al. 2010). It was here that EU objectives for development cooperation were outlined as primarily focused on sustainable economic and social development, integration in the world economy and poverty reduction. Yet, despite this legal anchoring, the EU has continuously struggled in determining an effective EU strategy, combining both an effective and efficient delivery of EU aid with a visible and relevant substance that would provide an added value vis-à-vis its member states (ibid.). In other words, the evolution of EU development cooperation in the last three decades has been a constant quest for asserting itself as a distinct actor, seeking to promote its own norms (Orbie et al. 2017). Hence, the increasing salience of sustainable development and climate change in the development rationale of the EU should also be interpreted in light of the increasing manifestation of the EU as a norm-maker in international development cooperation.

In sum, the EU can be considered a 'most likely case' in finding a transformational approach towards adaptation mainstreaming. In both development cooperation and climate governance, the EU has profiled itself as an ambitious actor that (i) pursues a norm maker role by aspiring to implement innovative internal policies and promoting these towards third actors, and (ii) aims to uphold a strong sense of dialogue and partnership vis-à-vis countries within the Global South. Due to climate change mainstreaming standing at the intersection of these two international leadership roles, the EU represents an exceptionally interesting case in finding a strong and innovative conceptualization and implementation of its mainstreaming rationale. In other words, I argue that, if traces of transformative mainstreaming were to be found anywhere, it would be in this context. Having outlined my choice for the EU as the central actor in this PhD dissertation, the next section is dedicated to introducing the theoretical perspectives that have been used in the different papers.



### 3. Theoretical approaches to the climate-development nexus

This PhD is based on a strong notion of theoretical pluralism, incorporating different perspectives for studying the climate-development nexus within the EU. In short, the sequence of different articles constituting this dissertation represent an evolution from an institutionalist to a critical perspective. On the one hand, **institutionalist** or organizational theory-based perspectives on the nexus focus on the organizational and procedural challenges of a mainstreaming process. Research in this regard is particularly focused on the tools and organizational adjustments developed by aid donors in order to properly mainstream adaptation in their development activities. More recently, scholarly work in this regard is also increasingly bridging the gap between theory and policy practice, looking into the effectiveness of such mainstreaming processes. To what extent are mainstreaming tools and adjustments effective in terms of generating sensitivity towards adaptation among development practitioners? And what are the barriers that hinder mainstreaming effectiveness?

In addition, **critical** perspectives to the nexus start from the idea that mainstreaming also triggers a process of providing meaning to adaptation as a challenge for development cooperation. Therefore, mainstreaming is not 'neutral' or technocratic, but a political exercise that implies a certain way of discursively representing or 'framing' the concept, thereby delineating the range of possible policy options for mainstreaming. Hence, determining what constitutes adaptation as a development challenge generates real power effects. Is incorporating adaptation in development work merely including more sectoral activities on natural resource management or sustainable agriculture? Is it continuing a business-as-usual approach in the sense that economic growth automatically means a higher adaptive capacity? Or does adaptation to climate change demand a paradigm shift in what is perceived to be 'good development'?

### 3.1 Institutional perspectives on the nexus: environmental- and climate policy integration

The first article of this dissertation fits within the literature rooted in institutionalism and organizational theory. Scholarly work in this regard approaches the climate-development nexus from the concepts of environmental policy integration (EPI) and climate policy integration (CPI). **Environmental policy integration** specifically targets the integration of environmental considerations into third policy domains of policy making, in order to become better able to achieve environmental objectives (Lafferty & Hovden 2003). More recently, as the salience of climate change as a wicked problem grew, the concept of **Climate policy integration** also found its entrance in academic literature (cf. Adelle & Russel 2013; Ahmad 2009; Dupont 2016). The origins of this strand of literature are commonly traced back to the work by Underdal (1980) on integrated marine policy, which introduced the concept of ‘policy integration’ within the academic literature. Conceptualizations of EPI and CPI tend to differ between policy integration as an overarching policy *principle*, a policy *process* or a policy *outcome*.

First of all, when considering EPI/CPI as a normative **policy principle**, the main conceptual discussions in the literature deal with the extent to which environmental and climate change concerns should prevail when integrated in third policy domains. Early explorations of EPI (e.g. Collier 1997; Liberatore 1997) pointed at its necessity to ensure sustainable development, and conceptualized EPI mostly in terms of removing contradictions between policies in this regard. Thus, EPI in such conceptualizations is mainly aimed at finding synergies between environmental- and other sectoral objectives. In contrast, a more elaborate and ambitious conceptualization of EPI was introduced by Lafferty & Hovden (2003: 9). They define EPI as:

“The incorporation of environmental objectives into all stages of policy-making in non-environmental policy sectors, with a specific recognition of this goal as a guiding principle for the planning and execution of policy; accompanied by an attempt to aggregate presumed environmental consequences into an overall evaluation of policy, and a commitment to minimize contradictions between environmental and sectoral policies by giving principled priority to the former over the latter.”

This definition is more far-reaching, as it includes the principle of *principled priority*, implying that a mere balancing act between environmental- and other sectoral issues is not sufficient. In other words, granting principled priority to environmental objectives distinguishes EPI from other forms of policy integration. It allows for the maintenance of the carrying-capacity of nature to become an overarching societal objective (Lafferty & Hovden 2003).

Also with regards to CPI, conceptual discussions on the scope of the concept have characterized the existing literature. Due to its inherent link with EPI, the conceptual boundaries between both concepts are rather hard to pinpoint. For example, some authors have argued for also normatively premising principled priority for CPI in the literature, in order to allow for conceptual comparability between EPI and CPI (Ahmad 2009; Mickwitz et al. 2009). In this sense, CPI becomes nothing more than replacing the word ‘environmental’ with ‘climate’ in order to conceptually delineate CPI (Adelle & Russel 2013). In contrast, other authors dispute granting principled priority to CPI and once again advocate ‘weaker’ interpretations of the concept. In their view, giving principled priority to CPI is at risk of conflicting with socio-economic interests in certain cases, or even with environmental objectives – given that both should be prioritized simultaneously if ‘strong’ conceptions of EPI and CPI are upheld in policy making (Adelle & Russel 2013; Dupont 2016).

In my view, the added value of these conceptual debates lies not in trying to impose superficial boundaries between EPI and CPI. In contrast, such discussions should provide researchers with a ‘yardstick’ according to which empirical accounts of EPI/CPI can be evaluated (Dupont 2016). In other words, conceptually delineating the extent to which EPI/CPI *could* influence other sectoral policy activities provides

researchers with the possibility of assessing to what extent EPI/CPI *is already* integrated in certain sectoral activities and whether the found integration endeavors can be perceived as far-reaching or not. Hence the analytical benefit of including principled priority in the conceptualization of CPI, as this allows for an operationalization that includes a broader range of possible CPI manifestations in policy practices. Thus, I choose to adhere to the idea of CPI as a mere extension of the EPI concept –including both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ forms of CPI – albeit with a sharpened analytical lens in order to empirically ‘zoom in’ on climate change specifically (Ahmad 2009).

When considering the literature on development cooperation, the concept of CPI is commonly known under the name of climate change ‘mainstreaming’<sup>4</sup> (cf. Huq 2004; Ayers et al. 2014; Klein 2007; 2008). Also here, we find similar forms of conceptualizing mainstreaming that seem to distinguish between weak and strong variants of mainstreaming. For example, the idea of ‘climate proofing’ development cooperation corresponds with weak conceptions of CPI. According to a typology by Gupta (2010b), climate proofing once again implies looking for synergies between climate change and development cooperation, thus implying an equal weighing of both objectives and striving towards a win-win approach. In contrast, climate mainstreaming according to this typology implies the redefinition of development cooperation through a climate lens, thus corresponding to the idea of granting climate change principled priority in aid activities (ibid.; cf. article 1).

Second, conceptualizing CPI as a **policy process** relates to the policy measures that are taken by practitioners in order to ensure that climate-related concerns are taken into account in sectoral policy making. A detailed understanding of CPI as a process thus allows for researchers to operationalize the concept for research and specify what they are looking for when assessing CPI in a certain empirical context. Such an

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<sup>4</sup> A possible explanation for this rather confusing use of concepts is the fact that ‘mainstreaming’ resonates more within a development aid context, as it links up to similar topics like for instance gender mainstreaming.

operationalization is a multi-dimensional endeavor and includes – among others – organizational and procedural aspects.

In terms of organizational aspects of the CPI process, this implies organizational restructuring by means of a shift from sectoral compartmentalization to more integrated forms of policy making (Persson 2004). In general, the literature describes both vertical and horizontal techniques for CPI. Vertical techniques concern the interaction between different levels of government, in which mainstreaming is driven by a hierarchically powerful agency (e.g. cabinet/parliament), which establishes climate change as a cross-cutting issue at lower level of government. In contrast, horizontal integration focuses on sectoral departments on a single governmental level. The main driver of the mainstreaming effort here is a less powerful environmental ‘champion’ (e.g. environmental ministry), which tries to generate responsiveness towards climate issues in other thematic agencies (Nunan et al. 2012; Persson & Klein 2008; Lafferty & Hovden 2003). It is important to note that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive policy options, but are instead interdependent parts of a broader integration strategy. In practice, CPI strategies are rarely completely aimed at vertical or horizontal coordination. Instead, they often combine the two approaches, in which central planning agencies create guidelines and provide knowhow to departments (e.g. through trainings), which then translate this input to a workable integration strategy within their organizational context (Nunan et al. 2012).

Another strategy is also to introduce new procedures aimed at generating increased sensitivity for climate-related issues in policy making. Of course, the list of possible procedural tools for enhancing CPI in third policy domains is almost limitless, and is very much dependent on the organization and the policy domain in which it is active. Within the realm of development cooperation, often cited examples are the use of ex-ante Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) at the program/sectoral level and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) at the project level, as well as the use of environmental profiles (Persson 2009: 414; Wende et al. 2012). Although these are originally tools for EPI, they can be adjusted to include climate-related concerns as well (Gupta 2010b). Other examples include the use of special ‘green’ budgeting

indicators (Nilsson et al. 2007), portfolio screening exercises (Klein et al. 2007) and the use of audits and check-lists (Gupta 2010b).

Finally, CPI can also be conceptualized as a **policy outcome**. In this conception, research focuses on the impact CPI-related measures have on the state of mitigation and adaptation in a particular context (e.g. in terms of avoided greenhouse gas emissions or strengthening of adaptive capacity) as opposed to merely evaluating CPI based on adequately mapping out how climate-related objectives are integrated in sectoral activities (Adelle & Russel 2013). Although certainly valuable, adequately measuring the impact of CPI measures on the mitigation and/or adaptation potential of certain actors is in essence a transdisciplinary endeavor. Therefore, assessing CPI as an outcome falls beyond the scope of this PhD project.

In **paper 1**, this institutionalist approach is used in order to assess the integration of climate change adaptation in the aid activities of the European Commission. It is specifically aimed at (i) providing an analysis of the organizational and procedural adjustments made by the European Commission in order to mainstream climate change adaptation in EU aid activities and (ii) evaluating their effectiveness in generating climate-awareness among EU policy makers on the ground throughout 9 different EU Delegations in Sub-Sahara Africa. Data-wise, this research was mostly based on interviews with policy officials (both in Brussels and in the field) and an analysis of EU policy documents.

### 3.2 Critical approaches to the climate-development nexus

As the previous part made clear, institutionalist perspectives – encapsulated in the literature on EPI and CPI – tend to focus mostly on the technical and policy-related implications of integrating climate change in development cooperation. Central are questions on how far policy integration should be asserted and what tools and organizational adjustments should be made to facilitate EPI/CPI. Throughout the research project, I evolved away from this literature and towards more critical perspectives on this integration process. Such perspectives consider the implications of CPI not only to be merely technocratic, but also political. On the one hand, the integration of climate change in third policy domains like development cooperation

also has the potential to alter the intervention rationale within them. Because of the fact that adaptation and development interrelate on such a fundamental level, integrating adaptation in development has the possibility to serve as a mechanism to alter some of the meta-narratives that shape aid activities (Ireland 2012). Therefore, some authors also point to a ‘reframing’ exercise as part of the CPI process, in order to re-establish problem and solution definitions in light of the specific climate-related challenges within a certain domain of policy making (e.g. Nilsson & Nilsson 2005). On the other hand, CPI might be nothing more than a discursive construction in order “to conceal the repetition of pre-existing development practices” (Ireland 2012: 94; Methmann 2010).

Critical perspectives thus start from the idea that CPI is by no means a neutral exercise. It also very much plays on the discursive level, as the way in which adaptation is presented in development discourse also plays a distinct role in how the CPI process is implemented in policy practices. Within development cooperation, there is no preconceived meaning as to what integrating adaptation in aid assistance exactly entails. Providing meaning to CPI is arguably the most important act in the CPI process, as it precedes and influences the technical and organizational policy measures which are taken in this regard. As a result, it puts the actor that has the ability to do this in a powerful position (cf. Dewulf 2013). Indeed, anyone able to discursively construct adaptation as a development challenge, is also in the position to determine how the issue is perceived among policy makers and what range of policy option is deemed eligible in order to put CPI into practice. Hence, although it is certainly valuable to describe what works and what does not in terms of integrating adaptation in aid activities, it is also necessary to take a step back and to reflect on what happens in the name of CPI, and problematize it by identifying the power effects that might follow from this. Therefore, this dissertation has incorporated a critical perspective towards the adaptation-development nexus by (i) performing a critical frame analysis of the discursive representation of climate change adaptation in the development discourse of the European Commission and (ii) by using a Foucauldian governmentality perspective for the study of the EU Global Climate Change Alliance.

This critical perspective on the nexus has inspired three articles in this dissertation. **Article 2** concerns a **critical frame approach** of climate change adaptation in EU development discourse: this part of the dissertation focuses specifically on the discursive representation of climate change adaptation in the development discourse of the EU. For this research, I employed an epistemological stance rooted in social-constructivism, which starts from the assumption that the way certain issues are discursively represented will influence the manner in which they are rendered governable. In other words, using framing analysis for critically engaging with the climate-development nexus within a EU-context allowed me to take a step back and look at the discursive foundations that shape the impetus to mainstream climate change in aid activities. I will not further elaborate on the concept of framing in this introduction, as the article using this perspective is already self-explanatory in this regard.

In **article 3**, a **governmentality approach** is used in order to further critically engage with the climate-development nexus in the EU. Inspiration is drawn here from post-structuralist, and more specifically Foucauldian, accounts of international climate change governance. In this article, I specifically engage with the power effects that lie hidden in discursive representation and policy techniques within the EU's thematic agency for adaptation assistance towards partner countries: the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). Moreover, a **theoretical article** can be found in Annex 1 to this dissertation, in which the case is made for using governmentality as a tool for analysis in the study of EU external relations. As this does not concern the main topic of this PhD directly, namely the climate-development nexus within the context of the EU, I chose not to include it in the main corpus of this dissertation. However, readers are encouraged to read this article before reading article 3, as it provides them with a comprehensive introduction to the theoretical foundations of governmentality, as well as its analytical benefits.

Contrary to the concept of framing, I will dedicate some extra space in this introduction in order to further outline the concept of governmentality. On the one hand, governmentality and the Foucauldian conception of power have been



profoundly influential in the last two years of my PhD project. On the other hand, due to inherent word constraints that come with the format of articles, the conceptual elaboration on governmentality in the two dedicated articles (one theoretical, one empirical) is still rather limited. Therefore, the following subsection is dedicated to properly introducing Foucauldian post-structuralism and the concept of governmentality, in order to provide the reader with some additional context in this regard.

### *3.2.1 Introducing governmentality*

“Though his self-selected title at the College de France was professor of the history of systems of thought, Foucault was himself far from being a systematic thinker. He once described his work as a Swiss cheese: readers found themselves in the holes and it was up to them to find their way out, choosing their own direction” (Willcocks & Mingers 2004: 239).

The above quote eloquently captures the pitfalls of immersing oneself in the works of Foucault. Although highly thought provoking, his work doesn't exactly provide a research with a ready-made schedule of how to translate his ideas into analytical tools for research. The same goes for the concept of governmentality, which became a central idea in my own research in the last two years of my PhD project. In short, governmentality deals with the power effects rooted in the interplay between the discursive construction (~rationality) of a particular policy issue, and the way in which it becomes operationalized through concrete policy techniques (~government).

Foucault's work, including governmentality, can be situated within a post-structuralist tradition. In essence, post-structuralism is based on an anti-essentialist ontology, which denies objects having an 'essence' outside of their social construction in discourse. Foucauldian post-structuralism is more 'material' than the pure textualism of post-structuralist thinkers like Derrida. Although incorporating a notion of contextuality of discourse and reality, it pays attention to both the discursive construction of political issues, as well as non-discursive practices that follow from it. It is post-structuralist in the sense that it trades in the deterministic for the dynamic, the overarching for the local and the objectifiable for the contextualized. However,

Foucauldian research is not 'purely' poststructuralist either, as it accepts the existence of an extra-discursive realm in the form of political, economic and social practices.

When taking a bird's eye view on the works of Foucault, it is possible to summarize them as a genealogy of the idea of what it has meant to 'govern' throughout history. In *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault gives numerous examples of evolutions in ways of governing the environmental planning of cities, the fluctuations in grain prices etc. (Foucault 2007). What his elaborations boil down to is that the 'art of government' is an ever-expanding activity, constantly incorporating new issue areas as possible objects of governing. Therefore, governing not only becomes more complex, but what it means to govern also shifts from the classic idea of a Machiavellian 'prince', external and transcendent to his principality, to what Foucault calls 'the art of government'. This is a far more subtle and complex form of governing which in essence introduces the notion of 'the economy' at state level (Foucault 2007).

Etymologically speaking, economy in its original meaning comprises the governing of a household, or making sure that a household is properly managed and flourishes. Thus, the 'art of government' implies properly managing the state like a household. This entails an extensive supervision and control over inhabitants and 'the conduct of all and each' (ibid.). Government no longer means governing over a territory, but the art of governing "the complex of men and things" (Foucault 2007: 135). In this sense, the idea of governing a 'population' is highly important and comes to serve a lot of functions that allow for the art of government to prosper. For example, it serves as a framework in which people are expected to behave in a proper fashion, in order not be excluded from it. Thus, this attenuates the need for large-scale disciplining, and gives leeway to processes of individualization and self-government.

However, this does not mean that this subtle art of government entirely replaces the 'old school' techniques of sovereignty and discipline. Quite the contrary, they become more necessary than ever in order to effectively manage the population. Thus, the 'governmentalization of the state' as Foucault calls it, is in fact an evolution from a Machiavellian notion of governing the territory through coercion and domination, to a complex interplay of "sovereignty, discipline and governmental management, which

has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism" (Foucault 2007: 107-108).

In the *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault comes closest to providing an overview of how this art of government plays out in contemporary times. In this work, he traces the art of government from the introduction of 'political economy' as a way of establishing the relation between the state and the market in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the rise of neoliberalism after the Second World War. Indeed, after the Second World War, Foucault identifies the rise of a neoliberal governmentality – both in Europe (Germany and France) as well as in the United States. The European variant of this governmentality (first articulated by German ordo-liberals like Von Hayek) changed two things to the classic liberal governmentality: First of all, it no longer accepted the 'natural' functioning of the economy, instead perceiving capitalist functioning as a construct which can be altered by political intervention. Second, it inverted the relation between the state and the economy. Instead of a self-legitimized state granting space for the 'naturalized' economy to exist, the well-functioning of the economy became the main source of legitimization for the state to be allowed existence<sup>5</sup>. In other words, the existence of the state was only legitimate as it set out the social conditions which allowed the market to function properly, that is without reciting to anti-competitive tendencies (Lemke 2001; Foucault 2008).

American neoliberalism – first conceptualized by the Chicago School – took this idea of the state only existing to serve the economy even further. In essence, it expanded the economic sphere into the social sphere, by re-defining the social in terms of economic principles. Rules that applied within economics became the blueprint of human action and even existence itself (Foucault 2008: 242; Lemke 2001). In line with the German ordo-liberals, American neoliberalism was also based on the idea that market functioning and competition were not natural states of being. Instead, these ideas were to be installed and maintained as political rationalities in the social sphere

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<sup>5</sup> This should be interpreted in the context of the West-German state after the Second World War. There was a dire need for a legitimization of German statehood which was in no way linked to the extreme nationalism that led to the Third Reich (Foucault 2008; Hamann 2009).

by political intervention (Hamann 2009). Therefore, governmental action was to be aimed at providing the legal and regulatory conditions for these economic principles to become the very foundation of individual practices and thought.

Hence, we arrive at what is arguably the famous definition of governmentality as “the conduct of conduct” (e.g. Lemke 2001: 191). Linked to neoliberalism, this implies an inversion of the relation between the state and the market: instead of governing the social sphere in order for the economic sphere to flourish, principles of market functioning become expanded into the social sphere (Foucault 2008). Although many examples can be given on how market principles have influenced the course of individual conduct, Foucault himself provides the example of ‘human capital’ and the power effects it has on an individual level. Not only does it effectively reframe social policies in terms of ‘investments’ in human capital, it also labels individual actors as entrepreneurs of themselves and human conduct as a form of enterprise in charge of human capital (ibid.). This has far-reaching consequences: as individual and collective enterprise become the basic entities of societal functioning, success or failure also exclusively become a personal matter. Thus, this effectively depoliticizes all structural conditions within society that co-determine whether one succeeds in life or not.

The fact that the man himself died over 30 years ago, leaves the task to new generations of researchers to re-interpret his work and apply it to new manifestations of ‘the art of governing’ in order for the idea of governmentality to remain relevant. Linking back to the quote in the beginning, some scholarly work tends to escape the cheese that is Foucault’s work rather quickly in this regard. In less metaphorical terms, they tend to only refer to Foucault’s insights on neoliberalism and thus blindly equate governmentality with it. As I will further explain in the articles using a governmentality perspective, the strength of governmentality as a tool for analysis lies precisely in the fact that it allows a researcher to immerse him/herself in a specific empirical setting and to uncover complex sets of power relations. Hence, governmentality is not only the idea of ‘the conduct of conduct’ or power operating through practices of freedom, but a concept referring to the complexity of power that lies contained within the art of governing.

### *3.2.2 Governmentality and the climate-development nexus*

Moving on to the climate-development nexus, the concept of governmentality is also highly relevant in this regard. Indeed, some studies inspired by post-structuralism have already used the concept in order to problematize some of the discursive constructions and policy practices related to international governance structures related to climate change in general (Stephan et al. 2013; Bäckstrand & Lovbrand 2006) and on climate mainstreaming in third policy domains in particular (Methmann 2010). Often, they refer to the term ‘green governmentality’ to signalize a way of governing nature and climate through what Methmann has dubbed a system of “planetary management” based on four pillars: globalism, scientism, growth ethics and efficiency (2010: 12-13). In other words, managing climate change is based on a technocratic approach in which nature becomes infrastructuralized and its value determined in terms of the resource outputs it can deliver (Luke, 1999). Therefore, instead of recognizing that nature encompasses economic production and capital, nature becomes a factor in capital itself and has to be managed in order to ensure that resource outputs are maintained (ibid.). This is pursued through large-scale scientific monitoring schemes that predict and mitigate climate risk and environmental degradation (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006; Luke 1999).

Apart from this notion of ‘green governmentality’, some authors also identify discursive constructions and policy techniques rooted in neoliberalism. This introduction of advanced liberal government within international climate politics has been commonly labeled ‘ecological modernization’. In essence, it is based on the idea that capitalism is expected to modernize itself, evolving towards a climate-neutral state (Buttel 2000; Mol 1997). Governing climate change in ecological modernization is built around the creation of fictitious commodities, which cause nature to be reduced to an economic asset (ibid.). The most prominent examples in this regard are emission trading and the practice of carbon offsetting<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Principle under which actors can compensate for their own emissions by investing in projects aimed at reducing emissions elsewhere (cf. Bellassen & Leguet 2007).

In sum, this section has introduced the two main theoretical perspectives that are used in this PhD in order to study the climate-development nexus within the EU. As an overarching contribution, the combination of both institutionalist and critical perspectives on the nexus can be considered unique and generates a holistic and multi-layered account of adaptation as a development challenge in the context of the European Union. Furthermore, each of the articles also in itself fills a void in the existing literature. Empirically, this research for example contains an investigation into the workings of the Global Climate Change Alliance, an agency which has so far been understudied in the existing body of scholarly work. Theoretically, this dissertation does not only provide an added value in terms of the incorporated research results. The constructed analytical frameworks in paper 1 and 2 can be used for further research as well, and can therefore be seen as contributions to the literature in their own right. Having outlined the different theoretical perspectives and their place within the overall research dissertation, the final section is dedicated to outlining the methodology and methods that were used in order to employ these different theoretical approaches as analytical tools for my research.

## 4. Methods and methodology

This fourth and final part of the introduction will be dedicated to reflecting on the methodological and epistemological choices made, as well as the main methods used in the course of this PhD project. For the sake of clarity, I conclude this part by providing a schematic overview of the different articles constituting this PhD dissertation, including their main theoretical approach, research questions, epistemological grounds and incorporated methods.

### 4.1 Combining positivism and post-positivism

On an overarching level, this entire PhD dissertation is based on qualitative methodologies. Yet, in terms of epistemology, the different papers reflect an evolution from positivism to post-positivism. In my application of institutionalist theory for studying adaptation mainstreaming in EU Delegations (cf. article 1), I depart from a **positivist** epistemology. In a nutshell, this research is implicitly based on a notion of an objective truth 'out there', which can be uncovered through scientific and empirical inquiry (Ali & Chowdury 2015). In my critical explorations of power effects rooted in the discursive constructions and policy arrangements surrounding the nexus within the EU, I was mainly inspired by a **post-positivist** epistemology. While positivism limits the role of scientific investigation to uncovering reality without questioning it, post-positivism stands for a form of science that is fundamentally reflective and problematizing. Moreover, it postulates a method of inquiry that is inherently normative: knowledge cannot be solely aimed at knowing for the sake of knowing, but must also serve a practical purpose aimed at human emancipation in circumstances of domination and oppression (Bohman 2005). The role of the researcher should therefore not be purely aimed at problem solving, but rather at asking how existing social or world orders have come into being, how norms, institutions or practices therefore emerge, and what forces may have the emancipatory potential to change or transform the prevailing order (Bieler & Morton 2004: 86).

This evolution toward post-positivism also implies an evolution in methodology from positivist to interpretivist qualitative research. Article 1 is firmly based on a positivist form of qualitative methodology: an analytical framework is constructed based on

existing theoretical insights regarding CPI in development cooperation, which is then empirically tested in order to come to generalizable statements about the reality of mainstreaming adaptation. In contrast, the interpretivist application of qualitative research does not start from the assumption that objective data can be obtained and generalized to make claims about larger populations. It does not seek to find objective truth, but rather aims at untangling patterns of subjective understanding (Roth & Metha 2002: 132). Moreover, researchers are not perceived to be neutral actors in relation to this kind of empirical inquiry. They are driven by certain assumptions, by a certain theory, which in its turn influences their research and findings (Mir & Watson 2000). In metaphorical terms, knowledge is not *excavated* based on gathering data representing an objective reality, but *sculptured* by the interaction between the theoretical presumptions and the empirical findings (ibid.: 943). Validity of findings in this regard is not based on the potential for generalization or the replicability of the empirical findings, but on the consistency and coherence of the empirical description (Roth & Metha 2002). This interpretative methodology is the common reference point for both article 2 and 3, while the theoretical assumptions behind this interpretation exercise differ between a more general critical perspective on the nexus in article 2 and a governmentality perspective on the nexus in article 3.

Finally, article 2 is based on the method of critical frame analysis. In essence, this method is aimed at discovering how a certain form of communication through text exerts power. The focus lays on the construction of 'frames' or particular discursive constructions that determine what is relevant or irrelevant regarding a specific issue or subject (ibid.). Frames determine the boundaries within which an issue is perceived by the audience, whether something is considered problematic and on what account, and what range of possible policy solutions are ought to be considered to serve as a response to this problem definition (Entman 1993). Hence, looking for such frames in documents requires a careful inquiry into the nuts and bolts of a certain text. In relation to the other approaches constituting this dissertation, the application of critical frame analysis can be considered as occupying the middle-ground between positivist and post-positivist epistemology. Although it is based on the social-constructivist premise that discursive constructions are constitutive to reality, it is still based on a positivist



methodology. Within the article, I depart from an analytical framework of three possible frames to be identified, and then look for the manifestation of these frames in EU discourse. Hence, linking back to the analogy made before, this application of critical frame analysis is still very much based on a notion of *excavating* knowledge, rather than *sculpturing* it.

In retrospect, the combination of positivist and interpretative methodology bears a number of strengths, despite the fact that they are often portrayed as incompatible due to their different ontological and epistemological basis. The way in which this combination is described by Roth & Metha (2002: 137), perfectly sums up my own stance towards this pragmatic combination of these different positions:

“Compatibility can be found between positivism and [...] interpretivism, which focuses on why and how individuals come to understand events as they do, yet recognizes that those understandings may be influenced by an objective reality that, while difficult to discern, is potentially knowable. Under this framework, it is possible to simultaneously accept that there is both a single objective truth of factual events and multiple subjective views of the truth that reveal much about the worldviews and perspectives of those who hold them.”

Hence, instead of being incompatible, the combination of positivist and interpretive approaches in this dissertation should be perceived as two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the institutionalist approach in article 1 meticulously sketches the reality of the climate-development nexus within the EU by uncovering the *modus operandi* for mainstreaming climate change adaptation in EU development assistance. Article 2 and 3 then build on this knowledge and add to it by engaging with the subjective understanding of the nexus: what does the particular constellation of discourse and policy measures tell us about how adaptation is perceived as a development challenge within the EU? And more importantly, what does this reflect in terms of power relations vis-à-vis EU partner countries. In sum, combining the two approaches allows for sketching a more holistic and complete picture of the nexus within the EU.

I realize that, despite making this theoretical case for combining positivist and post-positivist epistemology, it is still possible to point out the ontological inconsistencies of this approach. Hence, I would like to end this section by expressing my strong belief in such a pragmatic combination of seemingly incompatible perspectives in research, rather than dismissing their combined use for the sake of ontological consistency. Especially the use of post-structuralist inspired concepts like governmentality seems to automatically generate questions on one's stance regarding the nature of reality and its implications for research. I deliberately chose not to lose myself in these debates, because they divert energy and attention away from what actually matters, being the research itself. In my view, the primary yardstick for evaluating the combination of such approaches should be whether they can bring new and innovative research insights to the table. Since this particular constellation of research proved to be an effective way for me to arrive at what I am fully convinced are innovative insights, I am confident that this approach was the right one.

## 4.2 Methods and case-selection

In terms of methods, article 1 (institutionalism) and article 3 (governmentality) both rely on a combination of document analysis and semi-structured interviews, although based on different epistemological grounds. First of all, semi-structured interviewing is a specific form of inquiry that stands in between structured and unstructured interview techniques. Semi-structured interviews are structured in the sense that it is based on a corpus of key questions that determine the course of the conversation. Yet, at the same time, this method of inquiry is flexible enough to allow for both the interviewer and the interviewee "to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail" (Gill et al. 2008: 291). This is a major advantage, as it allows for new and insightful data to pop up without having previously been considered by the interviewer. Moreover, semi-structured interviewing is also more lenient towards probing techniques by the interviewer in order to obtain more information or additional clarification of certain answers (Barriball & While 1994). This flexibility during the course of the interview could invoke new and interesting insights that would not come up during structured interviewing, while also still maintaining a clear pathway that guides the interviewee along the different themes to be covered.

In total, 16 interviews were conducted in the course of this PhD project, both at headquarters level as well as in EU delegations in nine Sub-Saharan African countries. At headquarters (article 1 and 3), interviewees were active within DG DEVCO, DG CLIMA and the EEAS. Respondents were generally selected based on their affiliation to relevant thematic units, as well as through snowball sampling. Possibly interesting respondents were contacted via email, while most of the interviews themselves were conducted face-to-face. In case a face-to-face interview was impossible (due to the respondent not being in the country or to difficulties with finding a right moment for an appointment), interviews were conducted via telephone.

For article 1, interviews were also conducted with policy officials in EU delegations in nine different Sub-Saharan African countries<sup>7</sup>. My particular focus on Sub-Saharan African countries can be explained by its peculiar development context. Not only can the region be considered among the most climate-vulnerable in the world, countries here also represent the most complex constellations of development challenges in the Global South. Problems of environmental degradation and climate vulnerability strongly overlap with socio-economic challenges related to economic production, inequality and governance (see for example Davidson et al. 2003). Hence, this makes the task of properly mainstreaming climate change in aid activities and pursuing a transformative approach in this regard all the more necessary and challenging. In terms of the mutual comparability of the nine selected country cases, the individual country contexts were far less important than the comparability of the EU's role as a development actor in each of these countries. In this sense, all nine countries are very much comparable, as the EU can be considered an important donor in each of them.

Within EU delegations, respondents were selected based on their function within the agency and their expected knowledge of the mainstreaming process. As such, I mainly targeted Heads of Section active in sustainable development, sustainable agriculture, rural development and food security. This information was retrieved from organizational charts to be found on delegation websites. Targeted officials were subsequently emailed in order to invite them for an interview via telephone or Skype.

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<sup>7</sup> Ghana, Niger, Malawi, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Zambia, Uganda and Chad.

In case of non-response, a reminder email was sent after a week, and then again after two weeks. When receiving no answer after two reminder emails, officials were dropped from the list of potential interviewees. In some cases, this information could not be retrieved from the delegation website (e.g. when an organizational chart was absent or did not include names and contact details). If this was the case, an email was sent to a general contact email address from the delegation or to the Head of Cooperation, asking for contact details of the most relevant official within their respective delegation.

In the end, 9 out of 16 targeted delegations were included in this research<sup>8</sup>. Hence, 7 delegations<sup>9</sup> were not included for several reasons: a non-response after two reminder emails, technical difficulties when establishing a Skype/telephone call and a subsequent inability or unwillingness by the respondent to reschedule, a postponement due to agenda conflicts which were then not respected etc. Even when interview appointments were confirmed, it was still relatively easy for respondents to call it off. In retrospect, this was the main disadvantage of choosing to conduct interviews via Skype and telephone. However, I am confident that, in the end, the conducted interviews were sufficient in order to get a good overview of mainstreaming efforts in EU delegations. For one, many respondents were surprisingly open and often voiced roughly the same issues in their respective mainstreaming efforts, which in the end provided me with a good sense of the differences between the EU mainstreaming rationale as described in policy documents and as implemented on the ground. Moreover, all interviewees were well-informed regarding the mainstreaming initiatives taken within their respective delegation, even outside of their own sectoral activities. In general, they also considered themselves to be the central focal point for climate change. Hence, it is safe to say that this selection procedure was effective for me in order to get the information I needed, and that data saturation was reached in the end.

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<sup>8</sup> Important to note is that two interviews were conducted face-to-face in the EU delegation in Ghana by Sarah Delputte during a field research stay in 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Liberia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, the DRC, Rwanda, Swaziland, Kenya.

At the start of the interview, respondents were always informed about the topic of my PhD and the confidentiality of the gathered data. Moreover, they were always asked permission to record the interview, which they refused in a few cases. In case the interview was recorded, the audio was fully transcribed and then coded using NVivo software. In case recording was not allowed, a schematic representation of the interview was made during and after the conversation, which was then also used for coding purposes in NVivo. The software was used for both interview data as well as for document analysis, thus allowing me to bring structure and expose recurring patterns in the general pool of data.

Switching to document analysis, although this is often perceived as an 'additional' research method in order to acquire background information or some historical insight, it can also be seen as much more than that. They are a rich source of data in themselves, able to give a researcher a better view on technicalities in their specific field of expertise, as well as giving a broad overview of changes and developments in this regard (Bowen 2009). In combination with interviews, they can be considered a source for triangulating data of respondents in various forms. Among others, they can serve as a way of generating new interview questions, cross-checking some of the claims made by interviewees, as well as filling in some of the specifics that respondents might not be able to recollect during the course of an interview (*ibid.*). Thus, especially in triangulation with other research methods, document analysis can prove to be a real added value in research.

Table 1: Schematic overview of the different articles constituting this PhD project

<b>Central Research Question</b>	how can the nexus between climate change adaptation and development cooperation within the European Union be understood?		
<b>Theoretical Approach</b>	Institutionalist Approach	Critical Frame Approach	Governmentality Approach
<b>Article</b>	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
<b>Research question(s)</b>	What is the level of climate change adaptation mainstreaming in EU development cooperation?  What works and what does not in terms of adaptation mainstreaming?	How is climate change adaptation framed within EU development discourse?	How is power reflected through governing adaptation in EU development cooperation?
<b>Empirical Focus</b>	European Commission + EU Delegations in 9 Sub-Saharan African countries	EU policy documents situated within the climate-development nexus	Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)
<b>Epistemology</b>	Positivism	Positivism/Interpretivism	Interpretivism
<b>Method(s)</b>	Document analysis Semi-structured interviews	Critical Frame Analysis	Document analysis Semi-structured interviews
<b>Publication status</b>	Published in Environmental Science and Policy	Published in Third World Thematics	Submitted to Global Environmental Change (+ Theoretical article in Annex, published in European Politics and Society)

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# Article 1: Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into the European Union's development assistance

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# Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into the European Union's development assistance

## Abstract

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of mainstreaming efforts regarding climate change adaptation (CCA) in EU development cooperation. By constructing and operationalising an analytical framework capable of tracing the level of mainstreaming throughout different phases of the policy cycle, we provide an answer to the question 'what works and what doesn't' in the integration of climate change in development cooperation. We combine a document analysis with semi-structured expert interviews, encompassing both HQ level in Brussels as well as EU aid activities in nine different developing countries. Our findings indicate that the Commission envisions a harmonisation approach towards CCA mainstreaming, targeting aid activities related to sustainable agriculture, food security and rural development. Although the toolbox for mainstreaming allows for a prioritisation of CCA, the procedural approach is currently ineffective due to limited staff and mainstreaming fatigue. In contrast, the growing political salience of CCA mainstreaming can be considered the main driver of mainstreaming efforts in the Commission.

**Keywords:** Climate change adaptation; environmental policy integration; mainstreaming; European Union; development cooperation

# 1. Introduction

Aid donors increasingly perceive climate change adaptation (CCA) and development cooperation as a two-way street: CCA demands 'climate proofing' of development activities to ensure their sustainability, while aid can also strengthen partner countries' resilience to climate change (Gupta 2009). As a leading international donor, also the European Union (EU) has acknowledged the need to 'mainstream' climate change into its bilateral aid policies in its guiding documents on international cooperation (European Union 2006; 2011; 2017).

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of CCA mainstreaming within EU development cooperation for the current policy cycle (2014-2020). For this purpose we operationalise an analytical framework that traces the level of mainstreaming in different policy phases. Despite the growing literature on environmental policy integration (EPI) and climate policy integration (CPI) (Lafferty & Hovden 2003; Adelle & Russel 2013), empirical evidence regarding their implementation and influencing factors remains scarce (Persson et al. this issue). There is thus a need for taking stock of what is already being done under the banner of EPI, by evaluating its performance in different contexts. Such efforts can lead us to generalizable knowledge on effective EPI strategies (ibid.; Nilsson & Persson 2017). Second, we aim to contribute to the EU foreign policy literature. Despite the EU's image as the world's largest development donor and international climate leader, the inclusion of climate concerns in EU external relations is still largely uncharted territory (notwithstanding notable exceptions: Peskett et al. 2009; Gupta & van der Grijp 2010).

We will start by constructing an analytical framework that distinguishes between four phases of the policy cycle: agenda-setting, the policy process, policy output phase and implementation. Within every phase, we will further differentiate between three 'levels' of mainstreaming: coordination, harmonisation and prioritisation. This allows examining how and to what extent the cross-cutting issue of CCA mainstreaming is being translated from a general policy commitment to a concrete issue in EU development projects.



In analysing the policy cycle, we first examine how CCA is represented in some of the main EU development policy documents. Subsequently, we provide an overview of the mainstreaming 'toolbox' designed by Commission agencies, being the Directorate-Generals for Development Cooperation (DEVCO) and Climate Action (CLIMA). This is combined with an inquiry into mainstreaming within EU aid activities in nine developing countries: Ghana, Niger, Malawi, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Zambia, Uganda and Chad. We identify typical cases for the sake of generating a representative image of mainstreaming efforts. For every country, an analysis is made of the programming and implementation documents of EU aid: National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and Annual Action Programmes (AAPs). In addition, 12 semi-structured expert interviews with EU officials were conducted, both at headquarter level in Brussels as well as within EU delegations<sup>10</sup> in all selected countries.

Our analysis is followed by a discussion linking back to the broader EPI/CPI literature, followed by a number of policy-relevant recommendations. We conclude by providing some potential paths for further research.

## 2. Analytical framework

Literature on mainstreaming climate change in development has expanded in recent years (cf. Klein et al. 2007; Lauer & Eguavoen 2016). Overall, existing work strongly focuses on incorporating climate adaptation in development cooperation. Whereas mitigation measures are mostly confined to specific sectoral aid activities like energy infrastructure, adaptation relates to reducing the vulnerability to adverse climate change impacts, implying a broad spectrum of affected sectors and policy responses (Huq & Reid 2004). Thus, linkages between CCA and activities of donors are plentiful and development cooperation has a distinct role to play in increasing the adaptive capacity of societies within the Global South, targeting the underlying drivers of climate vulnerability (Klein et al. 2007).

Existing literature can be situated in the broader body of work on environmental policy integration (EPI) and climate policy integration (CPI). EPI is considered to be

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<sup>10</sup> EU delegations are the main implementing agencies for development cooperation in partner countries.

an indispensable part of sustainable development, and is generally defined as the act of “incorporating environmental concerns in sectoral policies outside the traditional environmental policy domain” (Runhaar, Driessen & Uittenbroek 2014: 233). This paper will focus on CPI, which emerged as a specific form of EPI because of the growing international attention towards climate change (Adelle & Russel 2013).

The literature is less straightforward on conceptual delineations of the terms ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’. Some ascribe the difference in terminology to merely differences in context. Yamin (as cited in Adelle & Russel 2013: 3) argues that the term ‘climate mainstreaming’ simply resonates more within development studies, as it lines up with other topics like mainstreaming gender and disaster risk reduction. In contrast, Gupta (2010: 79) does make a conceptual distinction, arguing that mainstreaming implies climate change “becoming the overriding objective” and that there is a proactive engagement with the issue. In contrast, ‘integration’ according to her refers to a more reactive approach, in which climate change is being taken into account as an “add-on, end of pipe solution”. This links back to a similar typology within the EPI literature: according to Lafferty & Hovden (2003), EPI can be separated from conventional notions of policy integration, because EPI ideally implies environmental objectives to be given ‘principled priority’, thus installing environmental objectives as overarching priorities in other policy domains (ibid.). In sum, the typologies of both Gupta and Lafferty & Hovden differentiate between ‘weak’ policy integration – a reactive, add-on approach to integrating CCA in development – and principled priority or mainstreaming – when CCA becomes the overriding objective in development cooperation.

More specifically, we will distinguish between four levels of policy integration: no integration, coordination (removing contradictions between policies), harmonisation (realising synergies between policies), and prioritisation (favouring CCA-related objectives) (Lafferty & Hovden 2003; Persson et al. this issue). While ‘coordination’ and ‘harmonisation’ can be placed under the banner of ‘weak’ policy integration, ‘prioritisation’ implies that CCA becomes pivotal in aid activities.

Within this paper, we aim to provide a comprehensive oversight of CCA mainstreaming efforts within EU development cooperation, by tracing it through various phases of the policy cycle. Already in 2006, the European Court of Auditors hinted at an implementation gap regarding climate mainstreaming in EU aid activities. This is a recurring observation within the existing literature: despite growing attention for climate change within the development community, mainstreaming commitments often do not result in adequate changes in policy practices (cf. Lauer & Eguavoen 2016). Somewhere along the line, the normative mainstreaming commitment thus becomes diluted and fails to materialise in development projects. However, no efforts have been undertaken to look into the persistence of this implementation gap within EU aid activities over the years. This study wants to fill the void by looking at mainstreaming efforts within the current aid cycle (2014-2020).

Such an inquiry also creates added value within the broader EPI/CPI literature. As Persson et al argue in this special issue, research increasingly moves beyond conceptual studies into the empirical realm, by taking stock of what is being done under the EPI/CPI banner and to answer the question “what works where, when and how?” (Persson et al. this issue: 113). Answering this question requires a detailed knowledge of the initial normative commitment to mainstreaming, the institutional setup, the available policy tools and their usage among policy makers. Thus, tracing mainstreaming efforts throughout the policy cycle is the best approach to find out what can be considered ‘effective’ policy interventions and to identify possible glitches in this regard.

We will focus on four different phases of the policy cycle (based on Persson et al. this issue):

1. Agenda-setting: to what extent is the initial need for mainstreaming articulated?
2. Policy process: what are the administrative routines and procedures available to facilitate mainstreaming?
3. Policy output: to what extent are CCA-objectives included in broad policy frameworks?

4. Policy implementation: To what extent are CCA-objectives included in the project design?

Thus, linking our policy cycle-based approach to our distinction between four ‘levels’ of CCA mainstreaming, our analytical framework allows us to track the level of CCA mainstreaming in each of the four phases of the policy cycle.

*Table 2: CCA mainstreaming in different phases of the policy cycle*

<b>Level of integration</b>	<b>No integration</b>	<b>‘Weak’ integration</b>		<b>Principled priority</b>
<b>Policy stage</b>		Coordination	Harmonisation	Prioritisation
Agenda-setting				
Policy process				
Policy output				
Policy implementation				

Of course, mainstreaming CCA in other policy domains is a complex endeavor and is bound to face difficulties. According to Uittenbroek et al. (2013), the mainstreaming process should be perceived as fundamentally dynamic, with its scope being constantly reconsidered due to new opportunities and/or barriers. Examples of such influencing factors are the availability of information and financial resources, the organisational and institutional setup for mainstreaming, and social and cultural differences resulting from differences in worldviews between groups (Adger et al. as cited in Uittenbroek et al. 2013; Moser & Ekstrom 2010). After tracking CCA mainstreaming in the different policy phases, we will discuss the influence of such factors on overall CCA mainstreaming (cf. ‘Discussion and policy relevance’).

### 3. Methods and operationalisation

First of all, we will operationalise the level of CCA mainstreaming by examining its framing in different stages of the policy cycle. Coordination will be operationalised as representing mainstreaming as an add-on component in aid activities. Put simply, CCA could just be incidentally mentioned in EU policy documents, without considering its influence on development activities. At best, coordination implies mainstreaming CCA in terms of end-of-pipe solutions, focused at mitigating the potentially negative impact of aid activities (Runhaar, Driessen & Soer 2009). Harmonisation implies that CCA is on equal terms with development activities in different phases of the policy cycle. Thus, mainstreaming would be framed as the need to find synergies between both. In the policy output- and implementation phase, harmonisation would be apparent if CCA is clearly interlinked with the projected aid activities, including references to how it affects the focal sector in question and how it can be addressed through planned interventions. Finally, prioritisation implies that the development rationale of the Commission is reframed in light of CCA (Gupta 2010). In later phases of the policy cycle, CCA would become the central reference point for designing sectoral intervention priorities and development projects. A full operationalisation per phase in the policy cycle can be found in Table 3.

In order to track CCA mainstreaming in different phases of the policy cycle, different data will be examined. Within the agenda-setting phase, we analyze how the Commission makes the case for CCA mainstreaming, by assessing the inclusion of the issue in the main policy documents underpinning EU development assistance, complemented with targeted expert interviews within the European Commission's DG DEVCO and DG CLIMA. For the policy process phase, we provide an overview of the available mainstreaming tools and look specifically at their usage by practitioners in the field. In order to map out this toolbox, we consulted the Commission guidelines for environmental- and climate mainstreaming, while again adding data from targeted expert interviews. Its actual use was assessed through semi-structured interviews with climate focal persons in active in EU delegations in nine partner countries.

Within the policy output phase, we examine the integration of CCA in the multi-annual policy frameworks for each of the nine countries (NIPs). These illustrate EU development priorities, disseminated per focal sector. Finally, within the policy implementation phase, we investigate CCA mainstreaming within the design of concrete development projects, reflected in AAPs<sup>11 12</sup>, once again complemented with data from interviews with climate focal persons in delegations.

Our research can be considered explorative in nature, aimed at investigating representative cases for EU mainstreaming efforts as a whole. Therefore, our case selection strategy is based on a typical case design (Seawright & Gerring 2008). The nine selected countries constitute typical examples of EU development efforts in which CCA should be mainstreamed: all are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and the EU is an important aid donor in these countries.

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<sup>11</sup> All consulted National Indicative Programmes and AAPs were extracted from the EuropeAid website: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/nipspins\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/nipspins_en)

<sup>12</sup> Our operationalisation of the implementation phase thus only includes an assessment of project designs, and not the actual implementation of project on the ground.

Table 3: Operationalised framework

Level of integration	No integration	Weak integration		Principled priority	Consulted Data
Policy cycle		Coordination	Harmonisation	Prioritisation	
Agenda-setting	- No mentioning of CCA mainstreaming	- CCA mainstreaming framed in guiding policy documents as add-on component in aid activities.  - Focus on promoting end-of-pipe measures.	- CCA mainstreaming framed in guiding policy documents as standing on equal terms with aid activities.  - Focus on finding win-win solutions between aid activities and CCA-measures.	- CCA mainstreaming framed in guiding policy documents as absolute priority within aid activities.  - Focus on installing CCA as overriding objective for aid practitioners.	- Guiding policy documents - Expert interviews within DG CLIMA and DG DEVCO
Policy process	- No specific procedures for CCA mainstreaming	- Mainstreaming tools intended and used for climate proofing sectoral aid activities (e.g. EIAs).	- Mainstreaming tools intended and used for finding synergies between sectoral aid activities and CCA.	- Mainstreaming tools intended and used for redesigning sectoral aid activities in order to prioritise CCA (e.g. environmental profiles).	- EU Guidelines - Expert interviews within DG CLIMA and DG DEVCO - Expert interviews within EU delegations
Policy output	- No CCA mainstreaming in sectoral policy priorities	- CCA mainstreaming in outlining of sectoral activities limited to incidental mentioning. Not interlinked with sectoral policy priorities.	- Clear image of how CCA affects sectoral activities and/or how sectoral activities can improve climate resilience.	- CCA as central priority along which sectoral activities are structured.	- NIPs - Expert interviews within EU delegations
Policy implementation	- No CCA mainstreaming in project designs	- CCA mainstreaming in project design limited to incidental mentioning, not interlinked with project designs.	- Clear image of how CCA affects the project design and/or how project can improve climate resilience.	- CCA as central priority along which project design is structured.	- AAPs - Expert interviews within EU delegations

## 4. CCA mainstreaming in the 2014-2020 cycle

### 4.1 Agenda setting

The 2014-2020 policy cycle was initiated in an international setting that increasingly emphasised the importance of sustainability within development assistance. Yet, the baseline documents that shape the agenda setting predate this dynamic. The European Consensus (2006) confirms EU commitments to combat climate change through development assistance, while CCA mainstreaming is framed as a central component in the support to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs) (European Commission 2006: 37). While this centrality already shows a high level of salience for integrating CCA in aid activities, it also becomes clear that this policy discourse still is in its infancy, with no clear elaborations on how the issue affects EU development efforts. Thus, CCA integration here can still be perceived as merely 'coordinative', as the importance of centralising CCA in aid activities is mentioned without outlining a clear vision on how to pursue this.

The Agenda for Change (2011) also displays a high level of attention towards CCA, with a more elaborate vision on mainstreaming. Sectoral aid activities within sustainable agriculture and energy are linked to improving climate resilience in partner countries, by promoting capacity building and technology transfers (European Commission 2011). This focus was clearly incorporated in the instruction notes sent to EU delegations prior to the formulation of the new NIPs (2012). Within these notes, CCA was again linked to a range of specific focal sectors like sustainable agriculture, fisheries and food security. Moreover, these sectors were (among others) to be prioritised in the choice of new aid priorities by EU delegations. Also included in the instruction note was a reference to the agreement to make 20% of the spending under the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework climate compatible (European Commission 2013). This norm is applicable to all policy domains, and thus has also become a general benchmark in EU development cooperation (Interview 1). It serves as an extra incentive for EU delegations to adopt the vision outlined in the Agenda for Change in their development priorities.



Thus, the agenda-setting prior to the programming of the 2014-2020 aid cycle shows clear signs of harmonising CCA within EU development assistance. In contrast to the 2006 Consensus on Development, the Agenda for Change outlined a clear vision on how a win-win relationship between CCA and aid activities can be established and which sectoral aid activities could specifically benefit the overall climate resilience within partner countries. This vision was clearly communicated to EU delegations and further strengthened by introducing the 20% norm for climate compatible financing.

## 4.2 Policy process

The programming process initiating a new aid cycle is led by EU delegations within partner countries. They are responsible for submitting a NIP-proposal to the relevant geographical desk officers at DG DEVCO and the External Action Service (EEAS). It contains a first outline of the EU's development priorities for the new aid cycle, structured along a series of focal sectors. These priorities are identified based on consultations with governmental agencies and non-governmental stakeholders.

The Commission has created policy tools in order to assist delegations in mainstreaming environmental objectives – among which CCA – in this initial outlining of development priorities. These guidelines for example recommend delegations to create a country environmental profile. These should contain an analysis of the country's key climate-related challenges and serve as blueprint for the inclusion of CCA in the NIP and concrete projects (European Commission 2016).

The Commission also created sector scripts for “providing practical guidance on the link between climate change and specific sectors” (European Commission 2009: 2). For CCA specifically, the sector scripts are intended to play a role in “applying a climate change lens to specific policies and planned interventions in order to avoid maladaptation” (ibid.: 8) and thus propose entry points for climate change in a wide range of focal sectors<sup>13</sup>. This should in the end culminate in a multi-sectoral

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<sup>13</sup> The sectors with specific mainstreaming scripts include agriculture and rural development, biodiversity, education, energy, health, infrastructure and transport, waste management, trade & investment and water & sanitation (European Commission 2009).

mainstreaming effort, aimed at enhancing societal adaptive capacity through aid activities.

But are these procedural tools actually used in practice? The presence of a country environmental profile is quite rare, and if a delegation does have such a profile at its disposal, it is usually outdated to the point of being irrelevant (Interview 5; 6; 7; 11). In other cases, the availability of a country-owned environmental analysis made a CEP obsolete (Interview 8; 10). Yet, sometimes such analyses within the partner country are also grossly outdated (Interview 6). In addition, our analysis of CCA mainstreaming in different NIPs reveals that sector scripts are not being used to their full extent in order to redesign sectoral activities.

Procedural tools related to coordination are environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and climate risk assessments. Their purpose is to assess the climate impact or to look at the effect of climate change on the programme/project. Screening exercises should be carried out to see whether such assessments are necessary and whether they have already been conducted by another actor. However, also for these procedures, examples are scarce and perceived added value is low. In most cases, they are not deemed beneficial for mainstreaming, but as “just another requirement” (Interview 11).

We can thus conclude that the Commission provides tools that – if fully implemented – could instigate the prioritisation of CCA in aid activities: country environmental profiles and sector scripts can inform EU delegations early on in the design of new aid priorities how climate change could be mainstreamed and how these activities could enhance the adaptive capacity of partner countries. In other words, they could invoke policy makers to use a ‘climate-lens’ to define their priorities for a broad spectrum of potential focal sectors. However, their actual use in practice is low, as can be said for procedures linked to coordination (e.g. EIAs). Although impact assessments are often only a legal requirement for infrastructure projects, we find that they are not perceived to be a real added value for mainstreaming. Regarding the climate risk assessments, most respondents were not even familiar with their existence.

This discrepancy between the objectives of the mainstreaming toolbox and its actual usage has to be perceived in light of a lack of human resources in many EU delegations. Officials frequently voiced a need ‘to prioritise’ in the context of such constraints, and are thus more preoccupied with general issues (e.g. maintaining a good relation and dialogue with the partner country) rather than specific checklists and procedures (Interview 9). Thus, the technicality and workload that these procedures imply, tends to undermine their use.

### 4.3 Policy outcome

Our findings from the previous phases of the policy cycle are confirmed in the choice of focal sectors in the final versions of the NIPs: all NIPs include one or two focal sectors that fall under the scope of CCA-relevant sectors as intended by the Commission. According to Herrero, Galeazzi & Krätke (2013), this applies to the whole of EU bilateral aid programming. This implies that the harmonisation effort in the agenda-setting phase bears fruit, as delegations pick up on this increased salience of CCA, something that was also apparent throughout our interviews. Regarding sustainable agriculture and food security, the discourse used within NIPs echoes the argumentation for CCA mainstreaming in the agenda-setting phase: activity in these sectors is perceived beneficial for improving climate resilience and adaptation capacity for local populations. Yet, evidence of prioritising CCA is much more scarce, as the main priority within these sectors remains the increase of agricultural output and economic growth. The evidence provided in the appendix shows that CCA measures are mostly framed as one of the preconditions for this to succeed, but are almost never the main priority of sectoral interventions.

In focal sectors that are not linked to CCA mainstreaming in the agenda-setting phase but covered by the Commissions’ sector scripts (e.g. governance and educational support), our research shows more variation in CCA inclusion. These range from harmonisation to no CCA-reference at all. In some sectors, only a coordinative effort can be distinguished: introducing a standard sentence in which mainstreaming is ensured through impact assessments in accordance with EU guidelines. As explained earlier, the actual use of these procedures within these focal sectors can be put into

question, and it might be the case that a standard sentence is added in order to what one respondent called “keeping Brussels happy” (referring to DEVCO) (Interview 4). Moreover, clear views of how climate change affects these sectors and what interventions would be feasible in this regard are often lacking.

#### **4.4 Implementation phase**

Our analysis of Annual Action Programmes (cf. table 5 in Appendix A) once again indicates that CCA mainstreaming is most likely to be upheld in projects situated within focal sectors related to agriculture and rural development. In other words, the level of CCA mainstreaming is most likely to remain ‘stable’ between the design and implementation phases in these sectors. Climate change is almost standardly included in such projects as a factor that could undermine sectoral activities. Therefore, projects almost always include a component that specifically targets resilience building or the introduction of climate-smart technologies. In other focal sectors, evidence suggests that mainstreaming efforts have an increased chance of becoming diluted in the formulation phase (e.g. projects within secondary education sector in Malawi, within the good governance sector in Uganda, and within the energy sector in Zambia).

### **5. Discussion and policy relevance**

Several notable insights can be drawn from our analysis. First, the Commission harmonises CCA in EU aid activities by emphasising the link between aid activities related to sustainable agriculture, rural development, food security and climate resilience in partner countries. This win-win approach is incorporated in the Agenda for Change and the instruction notes sent to EU delegations in the early stages of the policy cycle. This harmonisation dynamic is generally upheld throughout the different policy phases. Indeed, the nine selected EU delegations all include these focal sectors in their aid activities and structure their intervention logic based on the link between these sectoral activities and climate resilience.

Interestingly, the Commission goes beyond this harmonisation effort in the procedural phase: we described an elaborate toolbox to take mainstreaming the extra mile. The use of a country environmental profile could trigger a broader redefinition of aid activities based on the environmental and climatic situation in a partner country,

which could lead to the prioritisation of CCA. The same goes for sector scripts, which envisage a broader mainstreaming effort than apparent in the agenda-setting phase. However, these tools are far less effective than they should be. Together with other procedures like EIAs and climate risk assessments, their use and perceived added value can be described as low or even non-existent.

This leads us to a first answer on the question ‘what works’ in the EPI/CPI literature (Persson et al. this issue): procedural tools do not seem to be of particular importance for current mainstreaming efforts. The question then remains what drives this high level of mainstreaming. The most suitable explanation is that the political will to mainstream CCA is high within the Commission and seems to be growing still. The normative commitment towards CCA mainstreaming was clearly incorporated in the agenda-setting, despite the fact that the guiding documents predate the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The renewed Consensus for Development (2017) further confirms that the attention towards CCA mainstreaming is still growing: a lot of emphasis is put on linking the Paris Agreement on climate change with the Sustainable Development Goals, and to “maximise synergies” between these two global agendas (European Union 2017: 20). This tightening link between the Paris Agreement and the SDG agenda seems promising in light of mainstreaming CCA, and could further boost the impetus within delegations for prioritising the issue in their aid activities.

The EU also actively pursues diplomatic relations with third countries in the context of the international climate negotiations. These ‘green diplomacy’ efforts are coordinated by the EEAS and implemented by EU delegations and member state embassies, which engage in dialogue with partner countries, organising outreach events etc. These diplomatic efforts also positively influence development cooperation: the EU reinforced its dialogue with African countries in order to assist them in formulating their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions<sup>14</sup>, which also led to a better knowledge of its impacts in different development sectors (Interview 6, 7, 8, 11). In the future, NDCs could serve as a bridge between both

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<sup>14</sup> INDCs outlined the commitment regarding climate action of a country in the run up to COP21 in Paris. As soon as a country ratifies the Paris Agreement, it formally commits to its intended actions, and the INDC becomes an NDC (WRI 2017).

international regimes if they are embedded in national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals (GCCA+ 2016: 7). This could drastically improve the knowledge of CCA effects within EU delegations, and could be a promising alternative for the environmental profiles, which are irrelevant in current mainstreaming efforts.

Linking back to the CPI/EPI literature (cf. Persson 2008), the normative approach – articulating the political will for mainstreaming through high level policy commitments and the reallocation of resources – thus can be considered an important driver of current mainstreaming efforts. This compensates for the ineffectiveness of the procedural approach. Respondents frequently pointed at institutional and organizational barriers for explaining this ineffectiveness: delegations often need to operate in a context of constraints in terms of staff and expertise, while the oversupply in procedural requirements generates competition between different tasks and thematic issues within delegations, and adds to a sense of mainstreaming ‘fatigue’ (Interview 8; 11).

Yet, additional barriers – although not as explicit – can be identified on the delegation level. In terms of expertise for example, every delegation currently has a climate focal point at its disposal. Officials functioning as ‘climate focal persons’ generally also hold sectoral responsibilities related to agriculture and food security. This again adds up with the high level of mainstreaming in these focal sectors in different delegations. These focal persons can also play an important role in facilitating climate-awareness within these settings. Yet, some respondents explicitly stated that climate change was a non-issue in their delegation before their arrival (Interview 4, 8). This indicates the existence of cognitive barriers – related to normative convictions and values among policy makers – outside of these focal points. In other words, policy officials outside of these focal points may be less convinced of the need for CCA mainstreaming, which could also explain why a ‘broader’ mainstreaming effort – in a wider range of focal sectors – has not yet materialized.

Currently, technical and financial assistance for delegations is provided through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA+). However, its impact remains limited, with different respondents reporting different levels of cooperation with the agency. This

ranged from receiving actual coaching and expertise (Interview 7) to more ‘shallow’ relationships based on annual reporting of projects (Interview 12) or financial support (Interview 9). Although the GCCA+ is promising for becoming a ‘hub’ for expertise on CCA mainstreaming (GCCA+ 2015), these different levels of cooperation – together with the differences in mainstreaming efforts observed in our analysis of NIPs and AAPs – indicate that mainstreaming efforts tend to vary among EU delegations (cf. Appendix). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to pinpoint the factors that lead to this variation, it confirms Moser & Ekstrom’s (2010) argument that feasible strategies for further improving mainstreaming are always context-sensitive, and cannot be reduced to a simplistic call for ‘adaptive capacity building’. Therefore, although the GCCA+ can play an important role in further strengthening capacity and expertise in delegations, it seems justified to argue that the effectiveness of efforts to further improve mainstreaming in EU delegations will not only be achieved through such initiatives. Strengthening mainstreaming will also be determined by some specific factors within delegations, related to political leadership and the will to mainstream CCA among policy makers.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper provided a comprehensive analysis of CCA mainstreaming in EU development efforts for the 2014-2020 policy cycle. Already in its early stages, we find clear harmonisation efforts by the Commission: the guiding documents explicitly envision a win-win approach between development cooperation and CCA, by linking aid activities related to sustainable agriculture, rural development and food security to support for climate resilience. This harmonisation approach was upheld throughout the policy cycle: all assessed NIPs contain a focal sector in this regard and all of these in their turn show high levels of mainstreaming. We can draw similar conclusions on the project design. Linking back to the EPI/CPI literature (e.g. Persson 2008), we can conclude that the normative approach towards CCA mainstreaming within the EU is well-developed. The political will to mainstream CCA in aid activities is apparent in high-level commitments by the Commission, and is further reinforced through the 20% norm for climate compatible financing.

The fact that we perceive a top-down political will for CCA mainstreaming in combination with a reallocation of resources already nuances many of the described barriers in the EPI/CPI literature (cf. Uittenbroek et al. 2013). This can be explained by strong functional overlap between CCA and development cooperation: both domains are increasingly interlinked and aid can contribute to building adaptive capacity. This leads to an increasing connection between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with countries' NDCs under the Paris agreement. This could very well provide further impetus to the CCA mainstreaming effort within EU development cooperation, as NDCs could become the 'climate-lens' through which development activities could be redesigned. The fact that these NDCs are country-owned also ensures that mainstreaming efforts are jointly agreed upon, in order to prevent CCA mainstreaming becoming some kind of conditionality (Gupta 2009).

However, at the delegation level, we determined a sense of procedural overburdening in the wake of limited staff, and a lack of expertise among different officials with different sectoral responsibilities. Past assessments of climate mainstreaming in EU development already pointed at insufficient in-house capacity for mainstreaming, leading to practitioners not using available mainstreaming tools (Olearius et al. 2008). The presence of focal points for mainstreaming is already a positive development and can be linked to the harmonisation effort by the Commission within a well-defined set of focal sectors. Prioritisation would however imply that policy makers use a climate lens to redesign sectoral activities in the wake of CCA. Although sector scripts and environmental profiles are part of the procedural toolbox, they are currently ineffective in generating a broader mainstreaming effort.

The efforts of the GCCA+ to becoming a hub for expertise regarding climate mainstreaming could take away many of these obstacles. The GCCA could further centralise ownership and expertise for CCA mainstreaming, and could strengthen its ties with EU delegations in order to provide them with the expertise necessary. So far, the role and functioning of the GCCA has not yet received any serious academic scrutiny. However, the fact that it aims to serve as a centralised centre of expertise



regarding the link between development cooperation and CCA could make it an interesting case for further research into potential CPI/EPI strategies.

However, the observed variation between mainstreaming efforts throughout different delegations indicates that the context in which these efforts are implemented also plays a role. Further research could therefore extend empirical knowledge in this regard by scrutinising mainstreaming efforts in the field. Such research could for example focus on how the political leadership in delegations and the awareness towards CCA in the heads of policy officials influence mainstreaming. Furthermore, researchers could contextualise these efforts in the country in which they are implemented and also examine how partner countries' agency influences mainstreaming efforts of donors.

Finally, since the current development cycle is still ongoing, this research only represents a partial overview of CCA mainstreaming throughout the policy cycle. This article identified a number of obstacles regarding CCA mainstreaming efforts, as well as possibilities to improve these efforts even within the current policy cycle. Future research could complement this by looking at the entire policy cycle, including the role of policy monitoring and evaluation in identifying possibilities for improvement.

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## 8. Appendix A: CCA inclusion in policy output and implementation phase

Table 4: Level of CCA mainstreaming in policy output (based on NIPs, disseminated per focal sector)

Country	No CCA inclusion	Coordination		Harmonisation		Prioritisation	
		Focal sector	Evidence	Focal sector	Evidence	Focal sector	Evidence
Angola		Water & Sanitation	Use of Environmental Impact Assessments “in accordance with the provisions of the EU guidelines” (p. 20)	Support for technical and vocational training	Specialised CCA courses in training programmes.	Sustainable Agriculture	Improving sustainability of agriculture in context of climate change as main priority. Support for climate-smart technologies in order to build resilience.
Ethiopia	Energy	Road infrastructure	Standard sentence on the need to mainstream environmental concerns.	Sustainable agriculture and food security	Production growth, yet with attention to strengthening resilience in the context of climatic shocks.		
				Health	Climate change “affecting both social and environmental determinants of health” (p. 8). Focus on improving these environmental determinants.		
Ghana	Employment and social protection; Governance			Productive investments for agriculture in Savannah Ecological Zones	Rapid increase of production output and job creation. Attention for climate change adaptation in order to ensure an “inclusive and sustainable rural economy” (p. 20)		
Malawi							

		Governance	Use of Environmental impact assessments	Sustainable Agriculture	Yield increase of agricultural production in order to combat malnutrition and to increase commodity exports. Resilience of local populations against climate change needed.		
		Secondary education/vocational training	Use of environmental impact assessments and climate risk assessments mentioned (p. 21)				
Niger	State capacity building; Security and peace building	Improve access to conflict-prone regions	Use of Environmental impact assessments			Food security and resilience	Enhancing resilience and food security in the wake of climate change and environmental disasters dubbed main priority in this sector. Activities include the introduction of sustainable farming techniques, reinforcing tenure rights etc.
Sierra Leone		Government and civil society	Use of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments.	Education	Climate change awareness should be promoted through educational curricula. Incorporating climate risk in the design of educational facilities.		
				Agriculture and Food Security	Recognition of long-term negative impact of climate change in the sector. Focus on production growth with attention to CCA.		

Chad		Support for the rule of law	Use of Environmental Impact Assessments.	Food security	Weakness of production and purchasing power within agricultural sector linked to climate change. Changing climate recognised as context in which food security needs to be improved.	
				Natural resource management	Natural resource degradation due to climate change acknowledged as overarching context for sectoral activities.	
Uganda		Transport infrastructures	Use of Environmental Impact Assessments	Food security and agriculture	Supporting the green economy and production growth with attention towards climate resilience	
		Good governance	Use of Environmental Impact Assessments			
Zambia	Democratic governance			Support to energy sector	Decreasing climate vulnerability through access to non-biomass energy sources and increasing access to electric energy (p. 9).	
				rural poverty, food security and sustainable agriculture	Increasing CCA through the promotion of sustainable soil management and agroforestry practices	

Table 5: Level of CCA mainstreaming in implementation phase (based on AAPs, disseminated per project)

Country	No CCA inclusion	Coordination		Harmonisation		Prioritisation	
		Project ('corresponding focal sector in NIP')	Evidence	Project ('corresponding focal sector in NIP')	Evidence	Project ('corresponding focal sector in NIP')	Evidence
Angola				Revitalização do Ensino Técnico e da Formação Profissional ('Support for technical and vocational training')	Pledge to mainstream climate change in all technical and professional trainings – as mentioned in the NIP – upheld.		
Ethiopia	Biogas dissemination scale-up project ('Energy'); EnDev Ethiopia: off-grid energy solutions ('Energy')			Agricultural Growth Programme ('Sustainable agriculture and food security')	Production increase and commercialisation remains priority. Strengthening resilience through climate-smart agriculture is cross-cutting issue throughout project design. Concrete measures include for example enhanced small scale irrigation schemes.	Sustainable Land Management Programme ('Sustainable agriculture and food security')	CCA dubbed main priority in this project, through a wide range of land management projects, including integrated water management and capacity building with management server providers.
Ghana	Ghana employment and social protection programme (GESP) ('Employment and social protection')	Anti-corruption, rule of law and accountability programme ('Governance')	Climate change not interwoven in project design. But small part on providing 'some support' to National Committee for Civic Education to promote climate change vis-à-vis the EPA (p. 7).	Civil Society Organisations in Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development <sup>15</sup>	CSOs (e.g. farmer's organisations, university) framed as partners in sectoral activities regarding climate-smart agriculture.		
Malawi	Skills and Technical Education Program ('Secondary education/vocational')	Rural roads improvement programme ('Sustainable agriculture')	Climate proofing of road design in order to mitigate expected intensification of rainfall patterns.	KULIMA – promoting farming in Malawi ('Sustainable agriculture')	Agricultural growth central objective, but needs to be climate-smart/resilient. This will be addressed by		

<sup>15</sup> Cross-cutting project that targets both employment & social protection as well as the agriculture focal sectors.

	training’); Improving secondary education in Malawi (‘Secondary education/vocational training’)				targeting soil-fertility, land degradation and addressing soil fertility.	
				AFIKEPO nutrition programme (‘Sustainable agriculture’)	Climate change acknowledged as an immediate cause of undernutrition. Therefore linked to actions on climate-resilient agricultural production.	
Niger	No Annual Action Plans published					
Sierra Leone	Support for the education sector (‘Education’)			Boosting agriculture and Food Security (BAFS)	Specific objective to “Promote innovative and integrated farming concepts adapted to climate change” (p. 2)	
Chad	No Annual Action Plans published					
Uganda	Support to Uganda’s Financial Management and Accountability Programme (‘Good governance’); Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (‘Civil Society’)	Support for further development of the Northern Corridor road axis in Uganda – Kampala-Jinja expressway (‘Transport infrastructures’)	Climate-proofing of project design.	Development initiative for Northern Uganda (cross-cutting, all focal sectors targeted)	Building resilience to climate change through sustainable farming practices. + Climate proofing of infrastructure envisioned under the programme.	
				Institutional capacity building for transport sector (‘Transport infrastructures’)	Building climate resilience by developing tools for improving adaptation measures, as well as climate-proofing transport infrastructure.	
				Oriented and environmentally sustainable Beef-Meat value chain in Uganda	Adaptation interventions based on conducted SEA. Adopting climate-smart technologies for meat producers.	



				('Food Security and Agriculture')		
				Promoting commercial aquaculture in Uganda ('Food security and agriculture')	Climate change impacts on aquatic ecosystems considered a risk. Climate resilient production as one of main objectives of activities.	
Zambia	Aviation sector support programme (not linked to specific focal sector); Programme for legal empowerment and enhanced justice delivery ('Democratic governance'); Lusaka Transmission Distribution Rehabilitation ('Energy')	Support for Zambia energy sector ('Energy')	Some notion of impact assessments to mitigate climate risk and indirect benefits for adaptation.			

## 9. Appendix B: List of interviews

No	Date	Function
1	16/1/2015	official DG DEVCO
2	10/2/2015	official DG CLIMA
3	12/2/2015	Delegation staff
4	16/2/2015	Delegation staff
5	8/6/2016	Delegation staff
6	9/6/2016	Delegation staff
7	13/6/2016	Delegation staff
8	13/6/2016	Delegation staff
9	14/6/2016	Delegation staff
10	23/6/2016	Delegation staff
11	23/6/2016	Delegation staff
12	5/7/2016	Delegation staff

# Article 2: Framing the climate-development nexus in the European Union

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# Framing the climate-development nexus in the European Union

## Abstract

This paper aims to assess the framing of adaptation in the development discourse of the European Union (EU). Theoretically, three frames (security, growth and justice/equity) are constructed. Overall, we find clear traces of the EU's normative aspirations as a global actor. Instead of framing climate change as a national or global security threat, human security implications of climate change are emphasised, representing it as a threat to individual livelihoods. Justice/equity considerations are also voiced, acknowledging the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries. In terms of agency, we find mostly a global, top-down framing of adaptation in developing countries.

**Keywords:** development cooperation; climate change; climate adaptation; framing analysis; European Union

# 1. Introduction

In recent years, the international development community has increasingly emphasised the importance of integrating climate change in international development. This is due to its multidimensional nature, meaning it can potentially impact a wide range of development activities.<sup>16</sup> The broad spectrum of affected sectors creates many linkages with development policies, especially when it comes to climate change adaptation.<sup>17</sup> This was recently reconfirmed by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, which include in their mandate the need for international climate action to promote mitigation and adaptation in the Global South.

The emergence of the climate-development nexus has given leeway to a growing body of literature on the integration of adaptation in the aid architecture of donors.<sup>18</sup> However, these studies tend to approach the nexus in a technical manner, by listing a range of procedural and organisational adjustments that allow donors to take climate change into account.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, some emerging studies use a more critical perspective by introducing a broader conceptualisation of adaptation as a complex political and social process influenced by power relations, rather than a linear and neutral response to change.<sup>20</sup>

This paper situates itself within these critical approaches. It aims to analyse the different *frames* that are used to represent adaptation in development discourse. A frame can be defined as an 'organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included' and the act of framing as 'the process of constructing, adapting and negotiating frames'.<sup>21</sup> Frame analysis allows these

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<sup>16</sup> Persson & Klein, *Mainstreaming Climate Adaptation into ODA*, 2-3 and Kok et al., 'Integrating Development and Climate Policies', 104-105.

<sup>17</sup> Huq & Reid, 'Mainstreaming Adaptation in Development', 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> Agrawala & Van Aalst, 'Adapting Development Cooperation', 183-193; Ayers & Huq, *Supporting Adaptation*, 675-692 and Fankhauser & Schmidt-Traub, 'Climate Resilient Development', 1-26.

<sup>19</sup> Klein et al., 'Portfolio Screening', 23-44 and Agrawala et al., 'Incorporating Climate Change', 1-38.

<sup>20</sup> Eriksen, Nightingale & Eakin, 'Reframing Adaptation', 523.

<sup>21</sup> Verloo, 'Mainstreaming Gender Equality', 20.

discursive constructions to be examined. *Critical* variants often start from a Foucauldian interpretation of discourse, labeling it as a power mechanism which favors dominant frames while excluding alternative ones.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, we will look for different framings of adaptation, while also incorporating the power dimension behind these frames. Existing research has already addressed the discursive dimension of global climate governance,<sup>23</sup> and different frames regarding climate adaptation in particular.<sup>24</sup> A critical inquiry into its discursive linkage with development cooperation is, however, largely absent.

This paper assesses the framing of climate adaptation within the development discourse of the European Union (EU).<sup>25</sup> Although the EU combines its leadership role within the international climate change regime<sup>26</sup> with its status as the largest aid donor in the world, virtually no attention has hitherto been given to the nexus within EU studies. Moreover, the fact that the EU combines its normative aspirations towards developing countries with 'superpower temptations' rooted in its security and market interests,<sup>27</sup> creates a particularly interesting case to see how potential tensions between different role conceptions influence the framing of adaptation in its development discourse.

The next section will first introduce the concept of framing and frame analysis, as well as addressing its value for assessing the climate-development nexus. Subsequently, we will distinguish between three frames which have been identified in relation to climate change: security, growth, and justice/equity. Each of these frames will be discussed separately, including insights on how to recognise them in discourse and differentiations between top-down and bottom-up variants in terms of the agency of

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>23</sup> Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 'Planting Trees to Mitigate Climate Change', 50-75 and Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 'Climate Governance Beyond 2012', 123-147.

<sup>24</sup> Dewulf, 'Contrasting Frames', 321-330; McEvoy, Fünfgeld & Bosomworth, 'Resilience and adaptation', 280-293; McGray et al., *Weathering the Storm*, 17-25.

<sup>25</sup> For a general introduction to the EU's environmental and climate policies, please consult Delreux, Tom, and Sander Happaerts. *Environmental Policy and Politics in the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Bäckstrand & Elgstrom, 'The EU's role in Climate Negotiations', 1369-1386.

<sup>27</sup> Orbie, 'The EU's Role in Development', 17-36.

actors involved. In light of these frames, an assessment of 36 EU policy documents and speeches was made using NVivo software. We will conclude by discussing the implications of our findings, as well as providing directions for further research.

## 2. Critical frame analysis

Frame analysis has so far been used mainly in social movement theory and gender studies.<sup>28</sup> However, its basic underpinnings stretch beyond these topics and can be used for other areas as well. Within EU studies, frame analysis has proven to be a valuable technique to analyse the discourse surrounding a wide array of policy domains.<sup>29</sup> It has also been introduced in studies concerning EU development cooperation, assessing gender mainstreaming, for example.<sup>30</sup>

Framing studies start from the social-constructivist assumption that meaning is never a given, but is always socially constructed by actors. Different interpretations can be attributed to the same issue, and actors can steer debates and policies through the act of framing by providing and reproducing a problem definition (diagnosis) and a set of possible solutions (prognosis).<sup>31</sup> Critical frame analysis adds to these insights by assessing power (im)balances between different actors, paying specific attention to discursive biases and inconsistencies within frames, as well as processes of exclusion through which certain ideas, solutions and actors are silenced and thus marginalised.<sup>32</sup>

This paper also argues that the framing of climate change in development cooperation will influence the way it is integrated in development activities. Therefore, this process can only be fully grasped by also engaging with the discursive struggle that shapes it. Examining the frames that are being used to represent the climate-development nexus in discourse is thus necessary, as 'each framing influences the questions asked, the knowledge produced, and the adaptation policies and responses that are prioritized'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Johnston & Klandermans, *the Cultural Analysis of Social Movements*, 217-247; Snow & Benford, 'Ideology, frame resonance', 197-217; Lombardo & Meier, 'Framing Gender Equality', 101-129 and Verloo & Lombardo, 'Contested Gender Equality', 21-49.

<sup>29</sup> Daviter, 'Policy Framing in the EU', 654-666.

<sup>30</sup> Debusscher, 'Mainstreaming Gender', 39-49.

<sup>31</sup> Lombardo & Meier, 'Framing Gender Equality', 105.

<sup>32</sup> Verloo & Lombardo, 'Contested Gender Equality', 27.

<sup>33</sup> Dewulf, 'Contrasting Frames', 325.

Some authors have rightfully argued that concepts that are used extensively in the discourse surrounding the nexus – ‘improving climate resilience’, ‘achieving sustainable development’ – are essentially empty shells, deriving meaning from the context in which they operate.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, instead of treating these concepts in discourse as a given, research should try to uncover the frames in which they are represented, in order to truly grasp what they represent.

The existing literature on climate governance has already touched upon some controversial issues in this context. First of all, studies have focused on the securitisation of climate change, pointing out possible implications of a dominant climate security framing.<sup>35</sup> Other authors have identified a ‘neoliberal’ framing of climate change, which renders tackling climate change compatible with pursuing growth.<sup>36</sup> Third, a justice/equity-centered frame has been advocated in existing literature, focusing on the unfair distribution of climate impacts and how to achieve equity in this regard, both internationally as well as between different societal groups.<sup>37</sup> Finally, a distinction can be made between global/top-down and local/bottom-up framings of adaptation. While frames within the former category highlight the importance of the global climate change regime, including its scientific underpinnings and policies, the latter type of frames assign an active role to local actors and also incorporate notions of local knowledge regarding adaptation.<sup>38</sup> In the following paragraphs, we will link these frames to the nexus, while distinguishing between top-down and bottom-up variants within every frame.

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph, ‘Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism’, 38-52 and Methman, “‘Climate Protection’ as Empty Signifier”, 1-28.

<sup>35</sup> Oels, ‘From Securitisation of Climate Change’, 185-207 and Grove, ‘Insuring “Our Common Future”’, 536-563.

<sup>36</sup> Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, ‘Planting Trees’, 52-53 and Oels, ‘Rendering Climate Change Governable’, 195-197.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas & Twyman, ‘Equity and Justice’, 115-124.

<sup>38</sup> Cannon & Müller-Mahn, ‘Vulnerability, Resilience and Development Discourses’, 621-635.



### 3. Security framing

A constructivist conception of security was introduced by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (the 'Copenhagen School'). Their concept of securitisation was a departure from the narrow notion of security that focuses exclusively on the military dimension. Instead, they proposed a broader conceptualisation of security issues. Their central argument is that security policy cannot be seen as a mere reaction to an objective threat. Instead, it is socially constructed by speech acts by political actors and communities.<sup>39</sup> Securitisation therefore deals with the discursive strategy of representing issues as existential security threats in order to justify extraordinary measures.<sup>40</sup>

According to Buzan,<sup>41</sup> the shift towards securitising the environment was a result of an increased awareness of the impact of humankind's industrial expansion into ecosystems and its potential security implications. Therefore, it was seen by many as a force for the good, as it catapulted environmental issues into the realm of 'high' politics, introducing sustainability to the security debate.<sup>42</sup> However, it was also problematised by the Copenhagen School and a range of other authors,<sup>43</sup> who raised concerns about the danger of 'militarizing the environment and the rise of nationalistic attitudes in order to protect the national environment'.<sup>44</sup> This is also the case for climate change, which rejuvenated this debate after it was sidelined in the early 2000s, mostly due to the war on terror and the fact that the link between environmental degradation and conflict was no longer seen as credible in academic circles.<sup>45</sup> The issue regained political salience after climate security was put on the international political agendas of the EU and the UN by the end of the 2000s.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Trombetta, 'Environmental Security and Climate Change', 585-602.

<sup>40</sup> Waever, *Securitisation and Desecuritisation*, 1-31 and McDonald, 'Securitisation and the Construction of Security', 563-587.

<sup>41</sup> Buzan, *Rethinking Security*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Dyer, 'Environmental Security', 441-450.

<sup>43</sup> See Buzan, Waever & De Wilde, *Security, A New Framework For Analysis*, 71-95 and Graeger, 'Environmental Security?', 109-116.

<sup>44</sup> Deudney as cited in Trombetta, 'Environmental Security', 586.

<sup>45</sup> Trombetta, 'Environmental Security', 589-590.

<sup>46</sup> Oels, 'From Securitisation of Climate Change', 189.

Some conceptions of the link between climate change and security are still rooted in this environmental conflict discourse, as they advocate a narrow, state-centric version in both the diagnosis and the prognosis.<sup>47</sup> Within this 'realist' security framing, climate change is seen as a factor that could negatively influence already poor environmental conditions in many developing countries, increasing security risks.<sup>48</sup> Climate change is thus portrayed as a threat to the security of the state or the international system as a whole, through the potential destabilisation of regions and upsurge in climate refugees (i.e. 'diagnosis').<sup>49</sup> Climate adaptation should engage in identifying hotspots of environmental insecurity with the highest risk of conflict, and military capacity should be built in case such conflicts would come about (i.e. 'prognosis').<sup>50</sup>

In contrast, a human security framing advocates a different conception of security within the nexus. This frame highlights the vulnerability of individuals and local communities in the wake of climate change.<sup>51</sup> Apart from this overarching emphasis on the individual, there is a variety of frames that can be linked to human security. First, a 'narrow' human security framing engages with the potentially catastrophic consequences of climate-related disasters, and the threats they pose to individual livelihoods.<sup>52</sup> The prognosis is therefore mostly related to mitigating these consequences.<sup>53</sup> It can be situated within a techno-scientific approach to climate change, aimed at reducing the exposure of livelihoods to climate-induced disasters, which can be pursued by installing insurance strategies and scientific monitoring systems.<sup>54</sup> Second, 'contextual' human security links the climate vulnerability of local actors to a broader range of conditions, like socio-economic well-being and cultural and political conditions.<sup>55</sup> Contrary to the narrow human security framing, it

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<sup>47</sup> Barnett, *Security and Climate Change*, 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>49</sup> Trombetta, 'Environmental Security', 596. and Oels, 'From Securitisation of Climate Change', 186-187.

<sup>50</sup> Detraz & Betsill, 'Climate Change and Environmental Security', 314 and Barnett, *Security and Climate Change*, 1-17.

<sup>51</sup> Duffield & Waddel, 'Securing Humans in a Dangerous World', 1-23.

<sup>52</sup> Dewulf, 'Contrasting Frames', 326.

<sup>53</sup> See O'Brien et al., 'Climate Change and Disaster Management', 64-80.

<sup>54</sup> Dewulf, 'Contrasting Frames', 324-325.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 325-326.

introduces a social component to climate change in development, allowing for policy responses beyond techno-scientific interventions.

In relation to the agency of the actors involved, some diversification is possible in both the realist and human security frames. Regarding the former, the main referent object is the state, whereas individual actors are only relevant as their exposure to environmental degradation can trigger violent conflict. However, a realist security framing can differ in the extent that an active role is prescribed to the state in dealing with these issues. Developing countries can be labeled as 'fragile' or 'under severe stress' of climate change, while denying the possibility that they may be capable of determining their own adaptation policy in order to minimize the risk of conflict.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the capacity of states can be bypassed by elevating the climate vulnerabilities of states and regions to the global level, labelling them as international security concerns requiring top-down intervention.<sup>57</sup>

When considering agency in the context of a human security framing, reducing the vulnerability of local entities still does not guarantee their actual emancipation.<sup>58</sup> Defining vulnerability could still be a top-down process, in which the local level is treated as a passive victim of forces beyond its control. In contrast, a bottom-up security frames starts from the notion of agency and empowerment, either from the national or the local level. It highlights the national or local implications of climate change and the capacity of the state or local actors to identify and tackle vulnerabilities that could lead to climate-related insecurities.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Chandler, 'Resilience and Human Security', 213-229.

<sup>57</sup> Stern & Öjendal, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus', 16-17.

<sup>58</sup> Cannon & Müller-Mahn, 'Vulnerability, Resilience and Development Discourses', 621-635 and Thomas & Twyman, 'Equity and Justice', 115-124.

<sup>59</sup> In the context of human security, see for example Allen, 'Community-Based Disaster Preparedness', 81-101.

## 4. Growth framing

The discursive construction of climate change has been labelled in the literature as ecological modernisation, in order to be compatible with growth thinking.<sup>60</sup> Central to this frame is the argument that capitalism can modernise itself, evolving towards a climate-neutral state.<sup>61</sup> As a result, ecological degradation is decoupled from the current growth model which can be made more climate friendly.<sup>62</sup> This is combined with a sense of optimism towards technological, economic and political systems and their ability to handle the problem.<sup>63</sup> In international climate governance, ecological modernisation has given leeway to a number of market-based mechanisms in order to facilitate emission reductions. Well-known examples are carbon trading, like the EU's Emission Trading System, and carbon offsetting, in which actors can compensate for their own emissions by investing in projects aimed at reducing emissions elsewhere.<sup>64</sup>

The growth paradigm has profoundly influenced development cooperation over recent decades. In the 1980s, a widespread belief in growth through deregulation and marketisation culminated in the Washington Consensus, which ended up being heavily criticised by developing countries themselves.<sup>65</sup> The subsequent Post-Washington Consensus marked a shift in development thinking, revolving around pro-poor growth and poverty reduction.<sup>66</sup> In addition, a 'human development' approach started to gain ground, expanding development to include (among others) gender inequality, environmental degradation and climate change.<sup>67</sup> Although this is generally seen as a departure from the neoliberal, market-centered development paradigm of the 1980s, some authors argue that – rather than losing relevance – free

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<sup>60</sup> See Mol, 'Ecological Modernisation', 138-149 and Spaargaren & Mol 'Sociology, Environment and Modernity', 323-344.

<sup>61</sup> Buttel, 'Ecological Modernisation as a Social Theory', 57-65 and Mol, 'Ecological Modernisation', 138-149.

<sup>62</sup> Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 'Planting Trees', 52-53.

<sup>63</sup> Baker, 'Sustainable Development as a Symbolic Commitment', 297-317.

<sup>64</sup> Liverman, 'Conventions of Climate Change', 293 and Hyams & Fawcett, 'The ethics of carbon offsetting', 91-98.

<sup>65</sup> Sheppard & Leitner, 'Quo Vadis Neoliberalism?', 186-187.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>67</sup> Doidge & Holland, 'A Chronology of EU Development Policy', 68-75.

market thinking still dominates current development practices. In their view, issues like climate change were merely absorbed in order to fit this paradigm.<sup>68</sup>

Within this frame, the impact of climate change on developing countries is seen as a threat to economic growth and poverty reduction efforts. Adaptation in development cooperation becomes a matter of economising ecology in order to safeguard growth.<sup>69</sup> In terms of prognosis, a win-win relationship between growth and adaptation is instated, as an increase in the welfare of local livelihoods is seen as a major component of adaptation.<sup>70</sup> This frame therefore re-legitimises the classic notion of development as the pursuit of growth and favours market recipes like increased flexibility, cost-effectiveness and deregulation.

A strong belief in ecological modernisation can once again lead to a top-down framing of adaptation, preaching the dissemination of adaptation technologies through global markets. McMichael<sup>71</sup> labels this as the “marketisation of development adaptation” and argues that the agency of developing countries and local actors is denounced by promoting the top-down introduction of technologies from global markets over local adaptation strategies. In the agricultural sector for example, this framing could eventually undermine local agricultural practices, which become overruled by gene patenting from global biotechnological firms.<sup>72</sup> A bottom-up frame that links adaptation to marketisation and technological optimism would include an element of local agency, acknowledging local knowledge on adaptation as a valuable source of innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Methman, ‘Climate Protection’, 1-28 and McMichael, ‘Contemporary Contradictions’, 247-262.

<sup>69</sup> Newll, ‘Climate Change And Development’, 120-126.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 120-126 and Cannon & Müller-Mahn, ‘Vulnerability, Resilience and Development Discourses’, 621-635.

<sup>71</sup> McMichael, ‘Contemporary Contradictions’, 252.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>73</sup> See Aubert ‘Promoting Innovation’, 1-38.

## 5. Justice/equity framing

A third frame highlights equity and social justice issues in relation to climate adaptation. Discussions on historical responsibility for climate change and its disproportionate impact on developing countries have dominated international negotiations ever since their inception in 1992.<sup>74</sup> This frame acknowledges the inequity of climate change impacts. It starts from the diagnosis that climate change will hit developing countries the hardest, especially considering the fact that their populations are still heavily dependent on natural resources in order to generate a living.<sup>75</sup> At the national and local levels, climate change can aggravate inequality as it impacts differently on different sectors in society.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, adaptation in development becomes a matter of ensuring that its effects do not widen inequality in combination with aid activities. In contrast, the adaptation capacity of local actors can be built by addressing issues of equity and inequality through development cooperation.<sup>77</sup>

Once again, a distinction can be made between top-down and bottom-up forms of equity framing, which relates to the distinction between distributive and procedural justice.<sup>78</sup> Distributive justice framing is solely preoccupied with the distribution of climate impacts across countries, groups of people within countries, and across time. The only thing that matters is how development policy balances the uneven distribution of climate impacts. In other words, only the outcome of development cooperation in terms of improving climate equity is important, which corresponds with a consequentialist and utilitarian approach to climate justice.<sup>79</sup> This again allows for top-down adaptation in development, in which equity in terms of mitigating climate impacts is defined on the international level or by donors themselves. In contrast, procedural justice highlights the importance of stakeholder participation. Within this framing, an adaptation strategy can only improve equity “if mechanisms

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<sup>74</sup> Okereke, ‘Climate Justice’, 462.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas & Twyman, ‘Equity and Justice’, 115-116.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas & Twyman, ‘Equity and Justice’, 115-124 and Smit & Pilifosova, ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’, 879-906.

<sup>78</sup> Paavola & Adger, ‘Justice and Adaptation’, 1-19.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 7.

are in place to ensure that those impacted at the sub-national level have their interests considered".<sup>80</sup> In this sense, achieving climate justice entails a bottom-up approach towards adaptation in development in which all stakeholders affected by adaptation policies are included in the policy design.<sup>81</sup> For example, donors could support community-led natural resource management systems for sectors in which they are active, in order to generate locally embedded and sustainable policy options.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Klinsky and Dowlatabadi, 'Conceptualisations of Justice', 93.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 93-94 and Paavola & Adger, 'Justice and Adaptation', 1-19.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas & Twyman, 'Equity and Justice', 119.

Table 6: Summary of three identified frames

FRAME	AGENCY OF ACTORS			
	TOP-DOWN		BOTTOM-UP	
SECURITY	<p>Realist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National or regional climate insecurity framed as global threats.</li> <li>Adaptation to avoid conflict + military capacity building</li> <li>Passive framing of developing countries in dealing with climate-related insecurities</li> </ul>	<p>Human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual insecurity in the wake of climate-disasters (narrow)/broader vulnerability to potential climate impacts (contextual)</li> <li>Adaptation to reduce exposure to disaster (narrow)/reduce climate vulnerability (contextual)</li> <li>Active framing of local actors in reducing exposure/overall vulnerability</li> </ul>	<p>Realist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and regional insecurity due to climate change</li> <li>Adaptation to avoid conflict + military capacity building</li> <li>Active framing of developing countries, state can deal with climate-related insecurities</li> </ul>	<p>Human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual insecurity in the wake of climate-disasters (narrow)/broader vulnerability to potential climate impacts (contextual)</li> <li>Adaptation to reduce exposure to disaster/reduce climate vulnerability</li> <li>Active framing of local actors in reducing exposure/overall vulnerability</li> </ul>
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change threatens growth and poverty reduction efforts in developing countries</li> <li>Adaptation through the implementation of market recipes. Win-win relationship between economic growth and climate resilience</li> <li>Importance of international markets in providing technologies for adaptation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change as a threat to economic growth and poverty reduction efforts in developing countries</li> <li>Adaptation through the implementation market recipes. Win-win relationship between economic growth and climate resilience</li> <li>Importance of local knowledge as driver of climate-related innovation and entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	
JUSTICE/EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change as a driver of inequity in terms of its impact, both on the international and national level</li> <li>Adaptation in development needs to address inequity and injustice to avoid maladaptation</li> <li>Distributive justice: equitable distribution of climate-related impacts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change as a driver of inequity in terms of its impact, both on the international as well as the national level</li> <li>Adaptation in development needs to address inequity and injustice to avoid maladaptation</li> <li>Procedural justice: equitable distribution of climate-related impacts and participation of stakeholders</li> </ul>	



## 6. Analysis of framing in EU discourse

We will now use our typology to delve into the representation of the climate-development nexus in the discourse of the EU. The EU makes for a unique case in this regard, as it combines its self-proclaimed role as largest development aid donor in the world with international leadership in the international climate change regime.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, its 'eternal struggle' as a global actor between its identity as a normative power and its realist interests<sup>84</sup> creates an interesting dynamic which could influence the use of frames. Regarding its role as a donor, there is already a considerable literature on Policy Coherence for Development, which points out the tensions between normative aspirations in development and other agendas like trade interests and security issues.<sup>85</sup> In addition, the literature on EU climate leadership has also labeled it a strong advocate of ecological modernisation and a top-down, centralised form of climate governance within the global climate regime.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, it is interesting to see whether and how the three identified frames are represented and interact at the intersection of these two policy domains.

In order to conduct this research, phases of data gathering were alternated with data analysis until saturation was reached. In total, 36 documents issued by the European Commission have been assessed (for the full list, please consult Appendix 1). NVivo 11 software was used for systematically coding the data. It proved to be a useful tool in determining the prevalence and representation of the frames in EU discourse. Analysed documents include transcripts of speeches by the current and previous Commissioners in charge of climate change and development, and a range of policy documents and press releases elaborating on the link between both. These span multiple topics within the nexus in EU aid policies, ranging from climate financing in the Global South to disaster risk reduction in the wake of climate change and climate

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<sup>83</sup> Gupta & Grubb, *Climate Change and European Leadership*, 3-83 and Schreurs & Tiberghien, 'Multi-Level Reinforcement', 19-46.

<sup>84</sup> Orbie, 'The EU's Role in Development', 17-36.

<sup>85</sup> See Carbone, 'Mission Impossible', 323-342; Carbone & Keijzer, 'The EU and Policy Coherence for Development', 30-43.

<sup>86</sup> Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 'Climate Governance Beyond 2012, 123-147.

mainstreaming. The time period covered ranged from the early 2000s to the 2015 Paris summit.

## 7. Findings

First of all, ever since the first communications on the nexus, EU discourse has been closely related to the human security frame. Climate change is conceived as a problem of the increasing prevalence of natural disasters (e.g. floods, droughts, soil erosion etc.), thereby posing a real threat to developing countries and livelihoods. This human security frame is often used as an introduction and accompanied by a range of alarmist adjectives emphasising the gravity of the situation (e.g. *deadly* disasters,<sup>87</sup> *severe* and *irreversible* impacts,<sup>88</sup> *intense* storms<sup>89</sup>). In contrast, a realist security frame is only rarely present in the analysed documents. National and international security implications of climate change are sometimes mentioned, usually in relation to conflict as a result of resource scarcity and an expected increase in climate refugees.<sup>90</sup> However, this is nowhere near as prominent in EU discourse as the human security framing.

In line with this prevalence of human security in the diagnosis, the concept of climate resilience has entered EU discourse in recent years, becoming heavily emphasised in recent EU documents. This discursive representation is in line with the ‘empty shell’ argument mentioned earlier. It is included routinely in EU discourse as the overarching objective to achieve ‘sustainable, climate-resilient’ development, but this is a blank construction provided with a different content depending on the context in which it operates. Hence, its meaning fluctuates between a strong techno-scientific interpretation of adaptation and a more contextualised one. The following two quotes illustrate the difference between the two:

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<sup>87</sup> European Commission, ‘Commission Proposes a Global Alliance’, 2.

<sup>88</sup> European Commission, ‘The Paris Protocol’, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Piebalgs, ‘Climate Change: Don’t Forget the Pacific’, 2.

<sup>90</sup> See Barroso, ‘Climate And Environment’, 2.

“[...] boost local, national and regional capacities and resilience in ways that link sustainable development, risk management and adaptation in a “win-win-win” situation. It will thus improve regional capacities for climate monitoring, modelling, and vulnerability assessments.”<sup>91</sup>

“Adaptation is about building resilience within communities and economies to the increased risks resulting from climate change. It is a vast and cross-cutting development challenge.”<sup>92</sup>

As apparent in the two quotes, the former type of climate resilience in EU discourse is used more in the context of disaster risk reduction and is therefore strongly preoccupied with scientific monitoring, disaster risk reduction and risk management. In contrast, contextualised notions of resilience also include socio-economic factors that could potentially aggravate the impact of climate change. Much in line with contextual human security, resilience in this regard goes beyond the mere threat of climate-induced disasters and the ability of individuals and communities to withstand such events. Besides the framing of climate adaptation as a ‘vast and cross-cutting challenge’ for development, other noted examples in EU discourse are the formulated need to ‘mainstream climate resilience in development cooperation’<sup>93</sup> and the aim to also ‘reduce underlying risk factors’<sup>94</sup> to potential climate disasters, which is linked to rapid urbanisation, inadequate natural resource management, poor health etc. This seems to indicate that a multi-sectoral approach is favored as a policy response within the nexus.

Through the constant emphasis on the potentially disastrous impact of climate change for developing countries in the diagnosis, the human security frame also includes an element of geographical differentiation, which can be linked to a justice/equity frame. Almost all EU speech acts recognise the differentiation of climate change impacts – emphasising the fact that developing countries are the least responsible, but the most

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<sup>91</sup> Piebals, ‘Working Together’, 3.

<sup>92</sup> European Commission, ‘EU Climate Funding for Developing Countries’, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Piebals, ‘Engaging With Vulnerable Countries’, 2.

<sup>94</sup> European Commission, ‘EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction’, 8.

affected by climate change<sup>95</sup> – and climate change responsibilities – mentioning the need to cooperate based on respective capabilities and specific circumstances of developing countries.<sup>96</sup> In contrast, there is a clear tendency to frame the prognosis in global terms. This is constantly re-emphasised by referring to a global or universal partnership in fighting climate change:

“The overall objective of this strategy is to assist EU partner countries in meeting the challenges posed by climate change, in particular by supporting them in the implementation of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.”<sup>97</sup>

“The Paris conference should agree to assist those countries that need assistance to set up emission inventories, monitoring, reporting and verification systems, and to develop low emission and climate resilient development strategies with the right incentive structures.”<sup>98</sup>

Going back to the differentiation between distributive and procedural justice, the former thus seems dominant in EU discourse, as climate change as a development challenge is consistently framed in relation to the climate change regime and the global level. Despite the strong emphasis on the unequal impact of climate change on developing countries, there is very little evidence of framing that recognises the capacity within developing countries to cope with climate change. We find a similar silence regarding the inclusion of NGOs. Only two references were found mentioning the inclusion of non-governmental stakeholders such as civil society organisations, social institutions, academia, etc. Alternatively, the EU stresses its own importance by emphasising its ‘natural alliance’<sup>99</sup> with the developing world, mostly based on values again related to the multilateral level:

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<sup>95</sup> e.g. European Commission, ‘Commission Proposes a Global Alliance’, 1 and European Commission, ‘Africa Climate Briefing’, ii.

<sup>96</sup> European Commission, ‘EU Climate Funding for Developing Countries’, 4.

<sup>97</sup> European Commission, ‘Climate Change in the Context of Development’, par. 11.

<sup>98</sup> European Commission, ‘The Paris Protocol’, 4.

<sup>99</sup> e.g. European Commission, ‘Africa Climate Briefing’, ii.

“The EU and the Pacific Small Island States are longstanding allies. We share a lot of common ground – respect for science, equity, and the multilateral rules based approach.”<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, although the prognosis to a certain extent recognises the broader socio-economic context in fighting climate change, we find no evidence that this is matched by an active framing of local actors.

Not only are the described impacts of climate change linked to natural disasters that could lead to calamities in developing countries, there is also almost always the direct threat that climate change poses to sustainable development, achieving the MDGs and more recently the SDGs. In comes the growth frame, as development outcomes are often mentioned in terms of – or even equated with – economic growth. This takes the form of emphasising the ‘costly impact’<sup>101</sup> of climate change that could ‘hamper economic development’ of developing countries.<sup>102</sup> In this sense, adaptation in development thus becomes a matter of ensuring that the pursuit of economic growth can continue unabated.

There is also a strong element of opportunity with regards to the prognosis, which is aimed at starting a transition towards a greener and more sustainable economy, thereby leapfrogging the high-carbon phase of development. In relation to adaptation, there is a strong emphasis on the necessity of developing countries to create ‘enabling environments’<sup>103</sup> in order to attract international investments, private climate finance and technologies. Considering the agency of actors involved, the main sources of innovation and entrepreneurship for climate adaptation are thus placed outside developing countries themselves throughout EU discourse. The overarching mantra is that help is needed in facilitating these enabling environments to attract investments and technologies from the outside, whereas very few accounts mention the potential of innovation from the bottom-up. Therefore, it is safe to say that a top-down growth frame also dominates in relation to adaptation.

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<sup>100</sup> European Commission, ‘Speech by Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete’, 1.

<sup>101</sup> European Commission, ‘Q&A on the White Paper’, 4.

<sup>102</sup> European Commission, ‘Pacific Islands and Climate Change’, 1.

<sup>103</sup> e.g. European Commission, ‘The Paris Protocol’, 5.

## 8. Discussion and Conclusion

This article aimed to unravel the framing of the climate-development nexus within EU discourse. First, we found a strong presence of the human security frame, emphasising the threat climate change poses to individual livelihoods as a result of an expected increase in natural disasters (i.e. diagnosis). This translates to different notions of climate resilience, ranging from techno-scientific policies to deal with such disasters to more contextualised forms of the concept, focusing on the socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities (i.e. prognosis). Second, the growth frame is represented by diagnoses of climate change as a threat to growth and sustainable development. For adaptation, this relates to striving towards ‘enabling environments’ in developing countries in order to attract climate-friendly investments, finance and technologies. Third, the justice/equity frame is represented through emphasis of the inequitable distribution of climate-related impacts to developing countries and the role of development cooperation in tackling this inequity. There is a bias towards a global, top-down framing of adaptation, with very little attention given to the agency of developing countries, local actors and civil society.

If we interpret our findings in the context of the EU as a global actor in both the international climate change regime and in international development, echoes of its normative aspirations can clearly be detected, albeit with a distinct (neo)liberal flavour. Although we find strong evidence of the EU framing of climate change as an ‘existential threat’ to developing countries, this is never used to justify extraordinary military measures. Instead, the human security implications of climate change in developing countries are emphasised, which Manners<sup>104</sup> argues is compatible with a normative agenda targeting ‘sustainable peace’. The fact that the EU stresses the inequity in terms of climate change impacts in the Global South further adds to this point. However, despite the absence of ‘hard’ securitisation in EU discourse, a number of critical comments can be formulated which could be the subject of further research.

Firstly, the policy implications of linking security and climate change in the context of development cooperation could be evaluated more thoroughly. Similar research by

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<sup>104</sup> Manners, ‘Normative Power Europe Reconsidered’, 182-199.

Trombetta<sup>105</sup> concerning the climate-migration nexus highlighted the securitising potential of 'subtle' linkages with security in discourse, which can be situated within a human security framing. In her view, the absence of a discursive link towards exceptional measures does not rule out 'hard' securitisation in policy practices. In light of the argument made by Manners, which renders human security compatible with the EU's international normative aspirations, future research could engage more with this debate.

Secondly, the strong prevalence of a top-down framing of adaptation in development is problematic in different ways. Assuming the EU's leadership role within the global climate change regime, it is logical that it would echo many of the globalist frames advocated within this regime in its relationship with developing countries. Only now can we mark a shift in international climate governance in which emerging economies and developing countries are also becoming more emancipated actors. It is becoming clear that the international climate change regime is evolving towards a hybrid system of voluntary, country-led cooperation in which Southern actors claim a larger role. This is forcing the EU to invest more in diplomatic alliances with the Global South,<sup>106</sup> which could influence its discourse regarding the climate-development nexus in the years to come. Since our period of analysis does not include the post-Paris period, the overall representation of the frames within the nexus remained fairly consistent over time. Further research should examine to what extent this evolving context is influencing EU discourse.

Third, the prevalence of a top-down human security and growth frame can be linked to the Foucauldian concept of 'governmentality'.<sup>107</sup> These frames are considered discursive strategies for donors and international institutions to develop a centralised way of dealing with climate change in development. Implicitly, a geopolitical reality of the 'developed' Global North and the 'underdeveloped' Global South is installed, in which Northern donors are responsible for the 'resilience' of the passive Southern

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<sup>105</sup> Trombetta, 'Linking climate-induced migration and security', 131-147.

<sup>106</sup> Bäckstrand & Elgstrom, 'The EU's role in Climate Negotiations', 1369-1386.

<sup>107</sup> Grove, 'Insuring Our Common Future?', 536-563 and Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 'Planting Trees to Mitigate Climate Change', 50-75.

aid recipients by installing technologies like centralised risk management schemes and scientific monitoring systems<sup>108</sup>. The dominance of resilience thinking is also apparent in EU discourse, with the concept becoming omnipresent in more recent communications surrounding the nexus. Notable examples are the new EU Global Strategy and the updated European Consensus for Development. Authors such as Joseph have attributed the concept's popularity to the fact that it lacks any deeper meaning and serves as a discursive tool for rolling out a neoliberal governmentality vis-à-vis the Global South, focused on individualisation and "the disciplining of states, governments and elites" into accepting a neoliberal development paradigm.<sup>109</sup> This fits with our findings regarding the overall prevalence of the three identified frames and with the fact that the meaning of resilience in EU discourse surrounding the nexus also changes depending on the context. Therefore, the governmentality approach could be promising for future research into this topic.

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<sup>108</sup> Grove, 'Insuring Our Common Future?', 553.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph, 'Resilience as Embedded Neoliberalism', 51.



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# Article 3: Governmentality and the climate-development nexus: the case of the EU Global Climate Change Alliance

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# Governmentality and the climate-development nexus: the case of the EU Global Climate Change Alliance

## Abstract

This article uses a governmentality perspective to uncover the power effects that lie hidden in the functioning of the EU's Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). Although often represented as a technocratic exercise, integrating climate adaptation in development practices is first and foremost a political process. A governmentality approach is able to uncover such political underpinnings, by looking specifically at the discursive construction of adaptation in a GCCA context (rationality), as well as a particular policy techniques that render it governable (government). the EU discursively emphasizes the responsibility of partner countries to become 'resilient' in the wake of climate change consequences, while downplaying the transformative potential of adaptation for development. This dynamic is further reflected in policy techniques, which invoke self-governance effects among partner states in the form of producing quantified knowledge on adaptation. This in its turn further guides the allocation of GCCA support and is instrumentalized in order to establish a stable identity for the organization.

**Keywords:** climate change; adaptation; governmentality; European Union; development cooperation

## 1. Introduction

Adapting to the effects of climate change has become a prominent issue in development cooperation, leading to donors addressing climate change adaptation in their development efforts (Agrawala & Van Aalst 2008; Runhaar et al. 2018). The European Union (EU) has committed itself in this regard to *mainstream* climate change in development cooperation since the early 2000s (Adelle et al. 2018). In order to pursue this objective, the EU founded a dedicated institution in 2007: the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). The initiative aims to facilitate dialogue as well as technical and financial support for adaptation, in particular vis-a-vis Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (GCCA 2015a). Since it describes itself as “one of the most significant climate change initiatives in the world” and claims to offer ambitious and innovative approaches for adaptation in the South (European Commission 2015: 3), it can be considered a highly relevant representation of what it means to govern the climate-development nexus, both within the EU and beyond.

Within this article, a governmentality approach will be used in order to uncover the power effects hidden in the discursive constructions and policy arrangements of the GCCA. Despite an increasing scholarly attention to donors’ efforts in targeting adaptation in the South (Ayers & Huq 2009; Lauer & Eguavoen 2016), many existing studies tend to approach this issue in a technical manner, void of power relations. An alternative strand of research tends to go beyond such ‘technocratic’ accounts, perceiving the integration of adaptation in development as a distinctly political process with real power effects (cf. Eriksen et al. 2015; Dewulf 2013; Methmann 2010).

A governmentality approach traces such effects by linking the technical, micro-institutional practices that surround the adaptation-development nexus (*government*), with the overarching discursive formations that render adaptation governable in a development context (*rationality*) (Lemke 2001). Several authors have already attempted to use governmentality to shed new light on how power operates in EU external actions (Kurki 2011; Tagma et al. 2013). The concept allows researchers to look

for different manifestations of power, ranging from strategic interests and domination to more subtle forms of governmental management (Lemke 2001).

Apart from contributing to an emerging body of literature on the political underpinnings of adaptation, this article also constitutes one of the very first academic inquiries into the workings of the GCCA. Within the limited research into the climate-development nexus in an EU context (cf. Gupta & van der Grijp 2010; Adelle et al. 2018), the role of thematic agencies like the GCCA has so far been understudied. Due to the fact that the organization can be perceived as small and technocratic, the GCCA has received virtually no scholarly attention so far (for a rare exception, see Colebourn 2011). Yet, this article will show that the GCCA does invoke power effects through its operations in terms of creating a particular 'truth' on adaptation and how to pursue it, as well as how to generate knowledge on the impact of adaptation projects.

Methodologically, over 40 policy documents were consulted, covering both overarching discursive representations of the climate-development nexus, as well as technical documents on GCCA functioning. In addition, four targeted semi-structured interviews were conducted with policy officials closely involved in the inner workings of the GCCA, in order to get a better image of some of the technical aspects of its functioning.

The first part will introduce the GCCA as a site for analysis. Second, I will introduce the analytical components of the concept of governmentality and the Foucauldian conception of power. This is followed by our actual analysis of power hidden within the discursive representations and governance techniques of the GCCA. Finally, I will wrap up with conclusions and avenues for further research.

## 2. The GCCA

In recent years, the salience of climate change as a challenge for development cooperation has grown considerably. It is now well-established that non-industrialized countries will be disproportionately impacted by climate change, thereby putting additional constraints on their societies and on poverty reduction efforts by donors (Agrawala & Van Aalst 2008). Development efforts should therefore take climate change into account and assist countries in adapting to its effects. This is by no means an easy task, as the linkages between sectoral aid activities and the climate vulnerability of countries to climate change are complex and many-sided. Hence, the practice of integrating or 'mainstreaming' climate change into aid efforts of donors is still a policy area with many blank spots and unresolved questions (Lauer & Eguavoen 2016).

Within the EU, the increasing salience of adaptation as a development issue led to the GCCA being established in 2007 by the European Commission under the Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (ENRTP). It can be considered a particularly interesting organization for studying the climate-development nexus within EU external relations. It is placed at the intersection of both policy domains, as it aims to fulfil a bridge function between the EU's position as a climate leader in international climate negotiations (Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013) and its support for adaptation on the national and local level vis-à-vis non-industrialized countries.

The agency is structured around two support pillars: policy dialogue and technical and financial support for the implementation of national adaptation policies. The latter pillar is in its turn structured around three priority areas: (i) climate change mainstreaming and poverty reduction, (ii) increasing resilience to climate-related stresses and shocks and (iii) sector-based adaptation and mitigation strategies (GCCA+ 2018). In 2014, the GCCA became the GCCA+ as part of the newly founded Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme (GPGC). The new GCCA+ programme is said to be adjusted to the post-2015 climate change landscape by strengthening its relationship with EU delegations in third countries, strengthening

cooperation with the private sector and civil society and by basing its actions on nationally owned adaptation processes (GCCA 2015a). It was also set to include new funding modalities apart from grants to government bodies and innovative forms of communication and project monitoring.

The GCCA symbolizes an increasing importance of climate change in the context of EU development cooperation. The need for climate-related support was included in the baseline documents that guide the EU's development activities in third countries: the European Consensus for Development (2006; 2017a) and the Agenda for Change (2011). One of the central GCCA catch phrases is that it operates "from global to local" (GCCA+ 2016), which reflects the position of the GCCA as a complementary organization to the international climate regime, as well as to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (GCCA 2015a). This complementarity works in two directions: first of all, the organization aims to translate the outcomes agreed upon within the UNFCCC-framework to lower levels of government (regional, national and local) within the Global South. Within the wake of the 2015 Paris Agreement, the GCCA for example assists countries in formulating their Nationally Determined Contributions<sup>110</sup> (NDCs), as well as national adaptation strategies. Second, the GCCA+ also serves as a tool for 'uploading' climate-related concerns of its partner countries to the international level. The aim is to assist countries in determining their negotiation positions before the annual Conferences of the Parties, which is pursued through dialogue with national governments and capacity building initiatives.

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<sup>110</sup> Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) outline the climate action a country is willing to take as part of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement. As soon as a country ratifies the Paris Protocol, the 'intended' is dropped, and an INDC becomes a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (WRI 2017).

### 3. Unpacking governmentality

The concept of governmentality was first introduced by Michel Foucault as a way of tracing an evolving conception of ‘the art of government’ from the Middle Ages onwards. This includes ideas of what can be considered good forms of ruling and strategies and institutions to pursue this (Foucault 2007; 2008). Governmentality is commonly described as ‘the conduct of conduct’, introducing the idea that power does not only work through practices of domination or coercion, but also through practices of freedom and consent (Dean 2010; Rutherford 2007). In other words, power can also be found in the way in which institutions set the boundaries in which actors are able to think and act.

The two main analytical pillars of governmentality are ‘government’ and ‘rationality’ (Lemke 2001). First of all, the **rationality** refers to the power effect captured in discourse. Foucauldian epistemology starts from the idea that discourse is constitutive to reality: the way in which things are discursively represented, generate a way in which they are made visible and the way in which we are inclined to interact with them. Thus, discourse crystallizes into particular forms of knowledge around a certain topic. A governmentality analysis therefore pays distinct attention to the discursive construction of problems in order to become eligible for governmental intervention. Often, such mentalities of government are taken for granted by governmental practitioners, perceiving them as neutral and apolitical (Dean 2010). Critical analyses from a governmentality perspective aim to put into question such overarching mentalities, by looking at their underlying assumptions and how they link to existing knowledge and belief systems, as well as the actors that are able to determine them.

Hence, knowledge plays a crucial role in a Foucauldian conception of power. The very basis of his work is that truth is always constructed in a certain historic-cultural context or episteme, which “determines what counts as knowledge, truth and reality, and what is conceivable during a specific period” (Willcocks 2004: 250). In Foucault’s view, the evolution of the art of government in the ‘medieval’ sense to the more subtle exercise of power in modern forms of governing is related to the increasing importance of knowledge within the act of governing. In *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault

describes the expansion of objects of governing over time (Foucault 2007). As these objects became more interrelated and complex, more knowledge had to be created in order to render these objects governable.

Turning to the '**government**', this relates to the actual policy measures resulting from such discursive construction (Lemke 2001). These can be considered the tangible policy measures or practices that operationalize a certain 'truth' regarding particular issues, located specifically on the micro-level and targeting individuals through practices like documentation, statistics and surveillance (Merlingen 2006). Such practices have the capacity to determine what is considered 'normal' and what is aberrant, thereby invoking the homogenization of populations (Schmidt 2015).

In the *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault provided a contemporary account of the 'art of government', which he described as essentially neoliberal (Foucault 2008). Neoliberal governmentality bases subjectivities on economic principles of market functioning and competition, which then become the foundations of individual action (Dilts 2011). Through these subjectivities, "a homo economicus is actively constructed, not as a citizen who obeys rules, pursues common goods, and addresses problems it shares with others, but as a rational and calculating entrepreneur who is not only capable of, but also responsible for caring for him or herself" (Brown as cited in Hamann 2009: 43-44). This is a powerful tool for depolitization and individualization: personal success or failure are to be attributed to the individual, while collective or governmental responsibility for the factors that might lead to success or failure become diluted (ibid.; Foucault 2008).

However, instead of approaching governmentality as a synonym for neoliberalism or advanced liberal government, I consider it an 'analytics of government' (cf. Oels 2005; Dean 2010) aimed at uncovering a complex interplay of different forms of power in an empirical setting. By doing this, I will adhere to Foucault's own conception of a 'triangle' of three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management (Foucault as cited in Rosenow 2009). Sovereign power operates in the 'classical' sense, through law and violence over a given territory and its subjects (Walters & Haahr 2005: 9). Disciplinary power targets the body in specific and

confined settings by employing “surveillance and normalizing techniques to produce useful, calculable subjects” (ibid.: 10). Finally, governmental management refers to the conduct of conduct, or the exercise of power through actions of freedom. The concept of governmentality thus incorporates both power in the ‘classic’ sense and power through freedom and self-government. Hence, there is more to the concept than merely ‘the conduct of conduct’ or advanced liberal government.

In terms of methods, a governmentality approach requires a combination of (i) textual analysis in order to uncover underlying rationalities of government and (ii) a thorough insight into the micro-political practices which are deployed in order to deal with a certain issue. As I will show in our analysis of the GCCA, the merits of a governmentality approach lie in the description, connection and problematization of specific expressions of political rationalities, systems of knowledge and micro-practices.

## **4. Governmentality within the GCCA**

### **4.1 The GCCA as a case for governmentality analysis**

Despite a growing corpus of literature on the subject, our knowledge of what exactly constitutes the integration of adaptation in development is still in its infancy. Research by Ireland (2012) has done a good job of mapping out this lack of clarity surrounding the nexus, discovering a plethora of different interpretations and examples of adaptation within development cooperation among interviewed respondents. This has led him to conclude that “what happens in the name of adaptation is not yet set” (Ireland 2012: 107), an insight that also returns elsewhere: a lack of knowledge among development practitioners is a frequently cited obstacle in climate mainstreaming efforts by donors (e.g. Persson & Klein 2008), while the academic literature is also increasingly aimed at gathering empirical evidence of what works in terms of integrating environmental and climate objectives in aid activities (Runhaar et al. 2018).

Although this knowledge gap has sparked valuable research on the climate-development nexus, the bulk of literature in this regard can be considered depoliticized in nature. It is aimed at finding new and innovative ways of pursuing adaptation through development activities, and at better ways of integrating climate-



related concerns in the institutional architecture of donors. However, such studies tend to approach this integration process as a neutral exercise, and donor agencies pursuing it as ‘honest brokers’ in this regard (Opperman 2011).

This technocratic way of looking at the nexus can also be found in the discourse surrounding the GCCA. The organization often describes itself as ‘state of the art’ and able to explore new and innovative paths in order to facilitate adaptation in development (GCCA 2015a). The integration process is however portrayed routinely as a mere administrative innovation. Alternatively, the integration of adaptation in development can also be perceived as fundamentally political. If we consider the nexus between both policy domains as yet to be settled and therefore contingent, we have to perceive governance on this ‘frontier’ of policy making as inherent acts of creation and interpretation (Opperman 2011: 73). The framings provided and the policy choices made within the climate-development nexus are never neutral, as they determine how adaptation is perceived, what knowledge is considered eligible to inform adaptation trajectories, what range of policy options is rendered possible and which options are excluded. Agencies like the GCCA are not ‘honest brokers’ that merely provide adaptation assistance to developing countries. They shape the way adaptation is rendered governable and should therefore be considered political organizations, and their actions as having real power effects.

The following parts will critically engage with the power effects rooted in the discursive constructions and concrete policy techniques surrounding the GCCA. In line with a similar analysis by Kurki (2011) of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, this article aims to trace the power configurations that lie hidden in the institutional setup of the GCCA. This does not include the implementation of actual GCCA projects on the ground.

## 4.2 The discursive rationalities of adaptation

In the following paragraphs, I will argue that the discursive construction of adaptation in the context of the GCCA can be summarized as follows. First, it showcases a strong focus on the *consequences* of climate change in partner countries, mostly related to stability, security and growth. Second, this problem definition is met with a techno-scientific framing of adaptation assistance, focused on building resilience to such impacts through management schemes and gathering scientific knowledge. This particular discursive construction generates power effects by (i) responsabilizing partner countries for generating capacity in order to become resilient and withstand climate change impacts and (ii) downplay the transformative impact adaptation could have on the activities of the GCCA itself.

First of all, the GCCA discourse on adaptation strongly emphasizes the impact and **consequences** of climate change. The need to adapt to climate change in the context of development activities is often pictured against a background of ‘catastrophic’ climate change. A grim prospect of future climate change is painted, with numerous references to climate-related disasters and their security implications, such as the destabilization of entire regions and increasing tensions and conflict. Some communications also mention the potential for climate change to increase irregular migration to the EU (European Commission 2017b) and even link it to terrorism and radicalization (European Union 2017). Finally, the idea of climate change as a threat to economic growth is also established in GCCA discourse. Within this particular framing, climate change is mostly considered problematic in the sense that it hampers economic activity and the growth mantra that is ubiquitously present in development circles.

This problem definition of adaptation in terms of its potential consequences in terms of stability, security and growth is met with an intervention logic revolving around the concept of resilience. This is further defined in GCCA discourse as

“the ability of an individual, household, community, country or region to withstand, adapt to, and quickly recover from, stresses and shocks. Building resilience lies at the interface of humanitarian and development assistance and in the context of climate change is linked to disaster risk reduction and management” (GCCA 2015b: 4).

The concept of resilience in GCCA discourse defines adaptation in terms of mitigating climate risk and disaster risk reduction. It is for example stated that “the GCCA+ will help vulnerable countries to prepare for climate-related natural hazards, reduce risks and minimize impacts by integrating multi-sector risk management approaches in national development planning” (GCCA 2015a: 9). Examples in this regard are plentiful, often technocratic and for example linked to capacity building in improving climate science, introducing risk assessment models, enhancing measuring, and reporting and verification (MRV) schemes (GCCA 2016). This conceptualization as support for adaptation in terms of implementing technocratic and scientific methods is often placed under the banner of ‘climate-smart development’ (e.g. GCCA 2015a: 8).

This points at a scientific way of managing climate risk, something also apparent in the central role of *knowledge creation* on adaptation in GCCA discourse. Adaptation in this regard is framed in terms of “understanding the key drivers of risk and components of risk assessment” (GCCA 2016: 4). This “requires observing the phenomenon, producing relevant data to be used by decision-makers and learning from existing experience and best practices to design robust actions” (GCCA 2015b: 28). Knowledge on the risk associated with climate change needs to be produced on a scientific basis, and needs to serve as a blueprint for adaptation assistance. Although there are some minor references for the use of alternative forms of knowledge (e.g. indigenous knowledge), it is clear that the production of such knowledge is first and foremost based on scientific techniques. This is also explicitly recognized in the GCCA concept note, which states that “the best available scientific knowledge will inform GCCA+ actions and choices, including the possibility of developing and transferring technologies to support climate change actions in developing countries” (GCCA 2015a: 8).

Also in relation to climate change as a threat to economic growth and security, GCCA discourse mostly emphasizes the need to mitigate this effect in order to safeguard growth and stability. Regarding the former, this is for example apparent in the discourse regarding agricultural support, in which adapting to climate change is still framed within the perimeters of boosting productivity and growth (e.g. GCCA 2015b: vii). The increasing emphasis on public-private partnerships and attracting private investments for adaptation, also hints at a market-based approach to adaptation being pursued through the GCCA. Indeed, one of the aspired improvements in the switch from GCCA to GCCA+ was a stronger involvement of the private sector (GCCA 2015a: 11). In discourse, this translates into an increasing emphasis on public-private partnerships and building an enabling environment for attracting private investments for financing adaptation (e.g. GCCA 2012a; 2015b). Regarding the latter, discourse mentions “to use the GCCA to support and strengthen partner countries' capacities to identify, manage and mitigate security threats posed by climate change” (European Parliament 2008: 7).

In sum, the discursive construction of climate change in the context of the GCCA is mostly focused on its – potentially catastrophic – consequences in terms of stability, security and growth. As a result, building ‘resilience’ via adaptation mainly translates into responsabilizing capacity in partner countries in order to deal with and withstand to such consequences. From a governmentality perspective, two main power effects can be identified based on this framing. First of all, it shifts the limelight of providing security, stability and growth squarely towards partner countries themselves. At the same time, the GCCA reduces itself to an actor that assists in technical interventions in order to build resilience in partner countries. As such, this representation of adaptation tends to neglect the impact adaptation has on the providers of aid assistance themselves.

Indeed, it is frequently argued that adaptation could have a potentially transformative effect on development efforts (cf. Ireland 2011; Gupta 2010), by targeting the underlying drivers that render societies vulnerable to such climate impacts in the first place. To integrate adaptation into aid activities could also imply “locating such

activities in the context of power relations that have hampered development efforts over the past 40 years” (Cannon & Müller-Mahn 2010: 633). Indeed, as an alternative to economic growth, security and technological/scientific progress as the main pillars of reducing vulnerability, thus perpetuating the historic drivers of development cooperation, adaptation could shift the limelight towards power imbalances and socio-economic inequalities that leave people vulnerable in the first place. Rather than focusing on techno-scientific fixes, it could imply an increasing focus on “the social and political systems that within which vulnerability is created and sustained” (Nagoda 2015: 570).

Within the GCCA discourse, there are no traces of such transformative conceptualization. Adaptation is mostly instrumentalized to perpetuate existing development paradigms, instead of serving as a vector for change in this regard. The very notion of ‘finding win-win approaches’ (e.g. GCCA+ 2015a: 10; 2015b: 4) – something that is at the basis of the GCCAs approach towards adaptation assistance – implies that adaptation solutions are to be found within existing assumptions that guide development activities.

### 4.3 The government: policy techniques

This discursive emphasis on developing countries’ responsibility in adaptation, while downplaying transformative policies by the EU, is also reflected in policy techniques invoking self-governance effects in partner countries. In the following paragraphs, I will shed further light on (i) what self-governance effects can be identified in GCCA functioning and (ii) how these feed back into the reproduction of the GCCAs identity as a ‘state of the art’ organization.

Our research shows that the GCCA exports self-governance techniques that within the development cooperation literature have been linked to neoliberal governmentality (cf. Krever 2013; Merry & Conley 2011) and within the literature on the international climate regime to ‘green governmentality’ (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006; Rutherford 2007). Arguably, the two are closely related, as they both encapsulate forms of governance that replace the political with the technocratic (Welsh 2014). Neoliberal governmentality has been linked to the increasing use of techniques that socialize

developing countries into producing standardized and quantified knowledge on complex social phenomena, that in turn guides decision-making on foreign aid (Merry & Conley 2011). The literature on green governmentality in its turn describes the process of expanding such techniques of management and scientific inquiry into the realm of environmental- and climate change policy (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand 2006). This results in partner countries accepting a certain 'truth' on adaptation as intended by the Commission. Hence, "the process of measurement produces the phenomenon it claims to measure" (Merry & Conley 2011: 84) as GCCA partner countries provide the knowledge needed to legitimize a certain conception of adaptation.

The criteria for receiving GCCA support already hint at such self-governance effects. First of all, the GCCA explicitly describes the political commitment of partner countries as a condition in this regard. This criterion is defined in the GCCA+ concept note as being "engaged in the National Adaptation Planning (NAP) and Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) processes; demonstrate an interest in deeper cooperation with the EU on climate change, a willingness to assume ownership and a desire to scale up successful pilot and research projects from other regions and/or sectors, adapting them to the local context" (GCCA 2015a: 10). In addition, the 2008 GCCA implementation framework describes potentially eligible countries for support as "preferably politically active in the UNFCCC negotiations, and in this sense serving as a model for other countries in its group/region" (European Commission 2008: 23).

These criteria for receiving GCCA support explicitly define the agency's role in terms of creating "model states" within the broader international climate change regime. The question then remains what techniques are used in this regard. First of all, the **GCCA+ index** for the measurement and quantification of vulnerability aims to establish a clear-cut definition of climate 'vulnerability', in order to compare potential partner countries on this basis. This 'ranking' of countries based on their vulnerabilities is then used as one of the conditions to determine the eligibility of project proposals to receive GCCA funding. If a project is situated in a country more vulnerable to climate change according to this index, it is therefore more likely to receive financial and technical

assistance (Interview 1). Third parties need to specify their 'score' on this index, thereby marking their vulnerability to climate change according to a definition of the concept completely determined by the Commission (GCCA+ 2017b). This legitimizes a particular conception of what constitutes 'climate vulnerability' and perpetuates it in every project proposal that is submitted with the GCCA+.

Apart from this index, every project also has to live up to some requirements in terms of **monitoring and evaluation** (M&E). It needs to be initiated by creating an identification fiche and a logical framework (log frame), consisting of a number of indicators in order to measure its impact and outcome. These indicators can be taken from EU-based sources, such as the GCCA+ specific log frame and the GCCA+ index (cf. supra). In addition, a project design can also include indicators from non-EU sources, such as the SDG framework or country-specific frameworks. Although partner country governments are the main partners for GCCA-projects (Interview 2), local stakeholders (research centers, universities etc.) are consulted in order to generate knowledge on concrete projects, based on the selected indicators.

Although GCCA partners have some freedom in selecting their own indicators for a project that they would like to implement, the knowledge management strategy within the GCCA does strive towards some commonality in terms of M&E across projects. Actors are encouraged to use indicators from Commission-based sources (such as the dedicated log frame and the GCCA+ index) in order to generate some level of comparability between projects and to come to a more general understanding of 'good' adaptation practices in the field. Although most of these aspects of knowledge management are described in 'soft' terms – aimed at encouraging, rather than demanding this type of knowledge generation – it is clear that the quantification and streamlining of knowledge is an essential part of technical assistance through the GCCA. Sticking to the example of M&E schemes, these are not only an obligation for GCCA supported projects, their diffusion is also a goal in itself. One study explicitly scored GCCA partner countries on the quality of their M&E schemes and logical frameworks for programmes, as well as on their ability to effectively manage climate risks (Smith et al. 2014). The quantification and streamlining of knowledge through

such techniques is thus actively promoted and monitored through the GCCA. In addition, more 'direct' power effects in this regard can be observed in budget support modalities. As is the case in GCCA activities in Bhutan for example, improving the quality of statistical data and sectoral monitoring systems can effectively become a criterion for receiving additional tranches of budget support (GCCA 2015b :37).

This focus on quantification and statistical data is further perpetuated through the emphasis on **upscaling**, which allows for comparison between countries based on their performance in projects, as measured through the described techniques. This "scaling-up" exercise is part of the evolution from GCCA to GCCA+ and aims to elevate GCCA support from launching pilot projects towards supporting projects with a potential 'multiplier' effect, hence generating more impact with only limited funding. For example, upscaling could imply a continued or enhanced support for previously successful projects or the replication of a successful project template in a different setting (e.g. from the local to the national or regional level). In terms of implications for the partner country itself, the emphasis on scaling-up clearly gives the edge towards administrations having the capacity to "implement programmes with larger funding allocations" (GCCA 2015a: 10). Partners having a larger capacity - which, once again, is strongly connected to installing the right kind of monitoring systems - or having demonstrated their ability to successfully implement projects, inevitably score higher on this criterion for receiving GCCA support. In contrast, smaller states with less capacity are to be assisted through the implementation of larger regional projects, albeit adapted to the local context.

When bringing together these three instances of GCCA support criteria, it is evident that their combination forms a strong mechanism for invoking self-governance among partner countries. These seem to have no choice but to co-opt the policy techniques instated by the Commission, as they effectively function as criteria for receiving GCCA support. In their turn, these techniques determine the meaning of climate vulnerability, the meaning of a 'successful' adaptation project and the capacity needed to produce knowledge in this regard. In addition, if countries have successfully incorporated these techniques and adequately produce the knowledge products as



envisioned by the Commission, they are more likely to receive further GCCA assistance in order to ‘scale-up’ their projects.

Apart from invoking self-governance effects within partner countries, I also find that this production of knowledge is used for identity-building within the GCCA itself. This is already clearly reflected in the language used in the context of knowledge management. The need for a ‘consistent identity’ and a ‘branding’ of the GCCA is for example strongly articulated in a dedicated strategy on communication and knowledge management (2012: 3). Take for instance the overarching objectives of the strategy:

- I. Foster knowledge building (learning from experience) and exchange between and amongst the stakeholders, to improve their ability to contribute to successful GCCA outcomes and overall impact.
- II. Promote the visibility and a positive perception of the GCCA initiative, notably by building on the knowledge acquired in the field during implementation.

These priorities clearly show that the knowledge building exercise is mainly framed in function of establishing the GCCA initiative as an established center of expertise, and that the knowledge management and communication objectives are closely intertwined. The strategy goes on saying that “for the GCCA, communication and knowledge management are closely linked and feed into each other. Knowledge building based on achievements and results is at the core of GCCA communication, which aims to base its credibility on implementation results, and also to increase its impact through the use of thorough and evidence-based communication” (GCCA 2012b: 6).

In the same vein, the creation of a GCCA+ index for quantifying vulnerability not only puts the power of defining what vulnerability constitutes squarely within the EU itself, it also serves as a tool for establishing and reproducing the social relevance of the organization as a whole. One example in this regard is the dedicated annex in the GCCA orientation package – which serves as a crash course in how the GCCA functions and how to become eligible for technical/financial assistance – which

includes guidelines for actors to communicate success stories and even mentions the 'legal obligation' of this communication exercise (GCCA+ 2017c).

Hence, the power that lies in the knowledge production techniques used within the GCCA are not only reductionist and capable of invoking self-governance in partner countries, but organizations like the GCCA themselves have also become bound by the power of these systems and define their added value within its parameters in order to establish a stable identity (Freistein 2015). This is not only the case in relation to other organizations, but even in relation to its added value within the EU itself. Ever since its inception, EU member states have been reluctant in channeling climate-related aid through the GCCA. Especially bigger member states like Germany and France have been known to rather channel their funding through other – bigger – organizations like the World Bank (Colebourn 2011: 4). Thus, also vis-à-vis EU member states, this knowledge management objective aims to establish the GCCA as an added value in terms of climate financing (GCCA 2012b).

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

This article aimed to critically engage with assistance to adaptation within EU development cooperation through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). By using a governmentality approach, I showed that power is inherently present in both the discourse that renders adaptation governable through the GCCA and the policy techniques that shape its functioning. This is apparent in discursive elements that pointed at a technocratic and consequence-based conception of adaptation assistance, thereby reducing its transformative potential. In contrast, the responsibility of partner countries themselves is highlighted in this regard, by centralizing the concept of resilience in terms of maintaining economic growth, stability and security.

Within the policy techniques, this responsabilization of partner countries is again reflected in the criteria for receiving GCCA support. These effectively strive for modelling partner countries in accepting and perpetuating a certain conception of adaptation, based on M&E schemes and quantifiable knowledge products. The ability to determine what qualifies as knowledge on adaptation is infused with power relations, as it shapes the very reality of what constitutes the concept and how it should

be approached in policy making. This reality seems to be inescapable for partner countries, and bears the risk of repressing alternative or local epistemologies and practices that might display a different vision on adaptive practices (cf. Fogel 2004). Although the GCCA by no means neglects the local level in its operations, its assistance here is also mostly defined in terms of enhancing resilience, planning, observing and installing M&E schemes (GCCA 2015b).

Many of our findings relate back to the literature on neoliberal governmentality within development cooperation and – related to that – the work on ‘green governmentality’ within the international climate regime. What both of these have in common is their identification of self-governance techniques through monitoring systems substantiated with quantifiable indicators, which are in their turn legitimized based on scientific credentials. From this perspective, mainstreaming adaptation in development cooperation can again be perceived as an extension of these techniques into the realm of potentially transformative new policy challenges, in order to render them governable through roughly the same *modus operandi*.

The scientific and technocratic basis of adaptation assistance through the GCCA is not inherently problematic, but becomes so when used to reinforce existing development paradigms (such as growth and security) and to responsabilize partner countries in accepting a certain truth on adaptation and climate change in general. In this conception, the notion of ‘green governmentality’ is therefore a logical consequence of what post-development thinkers like Escobar have dubbed the self-perpetuating functions of development cooperation (Escobar 1995). This article thus reiterates many of the power effects observed in similar scholarly work, while adding additional insights into how discourse and policy techniques interact and produce such self-governance effects.

Within the GCCA, self-governance techniques are not only apparent in the relationship vis-à-vis partner countries, but also in the goal of creating a stable identity through gathering the knowledge products that these techniques are ultimately aimed at creating. In other words, the self-perpetuating dynamic lies precisely in the fact that organizations like the GCCA+ establish an identity based on the knowledge created

by these self-governance techniques. In order to show their added value as an adaptation-centered development agency, they need to prove their worth based on existing policy techniques within the development regime, thus transposing them to the creation of knowledge regarding adaptation. This is an interesting dynamic, which this article touches upon but could potentially spur further research.

Given these insights provided on the power effects rooted in GCCA discourse and policy techniques, I would like to advocate a more symmetric approach towards adaptation assistance. Adaptation is by any means a local phenomenon, and more can be done within the GCCA to find a balance between technocratic/scientific perspectives on the one hand and alternative perspectives on adaptation on the other hand. Indeed, although the importance of local knowledge is to a certain extent acknowledged within the GCCA, the setup of institutional arrangements and policy techniques clearly reinforce self-governance techniques that promote the scientific and the quantifiable. In other words, although alternative or local epistemologies might play a role in GCCA functioning, it is vividly clear that the frames of reference in which knowledge in this regard needs to be fitted is determined by the GCCA itself.

Finally, the GCCA can be considered an extension of EU climate leadership within international climate negotiations. Through its adaptation assistance, centered around a notion of resilience and techno-managerial interventions, it is implied that non-industrialized countries need to adapt to a future world in which the impacts of climate change are inevitable. The discursive introduction and use of resilience in the framing of adaptation in non-industrialized countries erases any alternative geopolitical future in which climate change is timely halted, and a present in which the inevitability of the outcomes of climate change remain contestable (Methmann & Oels 2015: 64). Although I do not contest the necessity of adaptation assistance, I do call for scholars' need to remain vigilant when it comes to such discursive constructions. Resilience can become a vector through which the margins of the climate change debate are slowly moved away from pursuing ambitious mitigation towards accepting increasing levels of global warming.

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No	Date	Function
1	23/5/2017	GCCA Official
2	25/9/2017	GCCA official
3	5/10/2017	EEAS Official
4	4/1/2018	DG CLIMA Official

# Concluding Remarks

## 1. Introduction

This PhD project aimed to provide a multi-faceted understanding of the climate-development nexus within the European Union. Through the course of this dissertation, the use of different theoretical perspectives for studying different empirical dimensions of the nexus allowed me to generate a detailed picture of what exactly happens in the name of adaptation mainstreaming within EU development cooperation, as well as the power effects that are generated through this mainstreaming rationale.

What drove this research was the observation that the international development community has been increasingly trying to take climate change adaptation into account. Due to the many ways in which climate change is able to affect societies in the Global South and thus influence development efforts, this mainstreaming process is by no means a straightforward exercise. Yet, our understanding of how mainstreaming is pursued and what its implications are for practitioners in both donor and partner countries is still in its infancy. In addition, adaptation can also be perceived as a new ‘frontier’ for development cooperation. Because of its complex interlinkages with development cooperation, the process of mainstreaming also implies providing meaning to adaptation within aid activities.

In the course of the last two decades, the salience of mainstreaming climate change has also grown considerably within EU development cooperation. The EU is an uniquely interesting actor in this regard, as it is often perceived – and also perceives itself – as a leading actor within international development cooperation and climate change governance. However, much remains to be known about how this integration process unfolds within the context of the EU. This leads to the overarching research question that underpinned this dissertation: **how can the climate-development nexus within the European Union be understood?**

The dissertation was built around two separate theoretical perspectives. First of all, the institutionalist approach towards the nexus focused on the – among others – organizational and procedural adjustments to aid activities in order to take climate change into account. I based myself on two main gaps in this literature: a general lack of empirical knowledge on the implementation of this ‘mainstreaming’ rationale in the field by aid donors (what works, what does not?) and the lack of knowledge in this regard on EU development cooperation in particular. **Article 1** was dedicated to filling this knowledge gap by looking at the mainstreaming of adaptation in the development activities of the European Commission in the current aid cycle (2014-2020).

The second perspective can be placed under the header of a critical approach towards the nexus. It was based on the assumption that pursuing adaptation in the context of development cooperation is a political process, rather than a neutral or technocratic one. The production of knowledge on what adaptation mainstreaming entails also implies that a particular conception of adaptation in development cooperation is presented as legitimate and a certain set of potential policy solutions as feasible. This process inevitably also excludes alternative conceptions of the integration process, and the possibility of governing it in a different manner. Hence, this approach allowed me to look for the power effects encapsulated in the way in which adaptation mainstreaming is being represented in EU development discourse and the way in which adaptation is rendered governable in development activities. **Article 2** looked at the discourse of the Commission regarding the nexus, using a critical frame approach. **Article 3** aimed at approaching a specific thematic EU agency situated within the nexus – the Global Climate Change Alliance – from a governmentality perspective.

The following sections serve as general conclusions to the overall research project. I will start by discussing the main findings presented within the different articles constituting this dissertation, as well as how they interrelate. Subsequently, I will reflect on the broader implications of my research in light of some of the debates that I have touched upon in the course of my PhD trajectory. Third, I will explore the limits of this research and formulate suggestions for further research. The final part of this

PhD dissertation will be dedicated to the policy implications and recommendations that can be distilled from this research project.

## 2. Main findings

This section is aimed at formulating overarching conclusions that can be drawn from the three research articles that constitute this dissertation. First of all, I will reconstruct the main findings for each of the three papers individually and identify the common thread that runs through all of them: the fact that adaptation is *retrofitted* in development cooperation, rather than invoking any transformation or system change in this regard. Second, I will argue that the two theoretical perspectives used within this dissertation represent two distinct layers of understanding the climate-development nexus within the EU, with the political underpinnings of adaptation mainstreaming influencing the institutional setup that has been erected in this regard.

### 2.1 *Retrofitting* adaptation in development cooperation

As said in the introduction, the different articles presented in this dissertation are based on two overarching theoretical perspectives. Combining the individual findings of the three articles therefore provides an integrated and multi-faceted answer to the question as to how the EU climate-development nexus can be understood. Within the following paragraphs, I will further elaborate on how the provided insights throughout the different articles connect and interlock, and how their combination enhances our understanding of the climate-development nexus. I argue that the common thread throughout the different articles is twofold: on the one hand, all three articles point to a retrofitting of adaptation in development. In short, adaptation is encapsulated within existing development ideas and structures, instead of serving as a transformative concept in this regard. Second, all articles clearly point to a top-down conception of adaptation mainstreaming.

On an institutional level, I found that mainstreaming efforts within this current aid cycle are high. Linking back to the analytical framework used in article 1, the Commission's mainstreaming efforts were described in terms of 'harmonization'. This refers to a win-win approach in which adaptation is strongly incorporated in focal sectors such as rural development, agriculture and food security in all of the

investigated country contexts. The link between adaptation and such sectoral aid activities was already strongly embedded in the agenda-setting for the current policy cycle, for instance by explicitly referring to these interlinkages in the instruction notes sent to EU delegations prior to the formulation of their respective NIPs. Mainstreaming efforts for these specific focal sectors generally remains upheld throughout the policy cycle. In contrast, mainstreaming levels for other focal sectors showed more fluctuations, both among countries as well as throughout different phases of the policy cycle.

This high level of mainstreaming was linked to the growing salience and political will regarding adaptation mainstreaming within the Commission. This is for example evident in terms of financial incentives for mainstreaming, of which the 20% norm for climate-compatible financing in the current MFF is the main manifestation. Moreover, the commitment to mainstream climate change in aid activities is also persistently included in all overarching documents that guide EU development activities, such as the Agenda for Change (2011) and both the old and new European Consensus for Development (2006; 2017). On the level of EU delegations, article 1 pointed at the important role of dedicated focal persons for pushing the mainstreaming rationale within their respective delegations.

Hence, the institutionalist approach to the nexus identified an integration rationale which has reached a point of self-evidence among many EU delegations. Yet, the influence of adaptation on development efforts is still confined in terms of ambition and scope. Indeed, little or no evidence of *prioritizing* climate change adaptation in development activities was found. In other words, the characterization of EU mainstreaming efforts as 'harmonization' points at finding win-win approaches for adaptation in the context of aid activities, but not at adaptation invoking any system change in aid activities.

Institutionalist explanations for this observation pointed at various mainstreaming barriers in this regard. For one, the effectiveness of procedural tools and organizational adjustments as intended by HQ-agencies within the Commission is hampered by a sense of mainstreaming fatigue, procedural overburdening and limited staff/expertise

within many delegations. This was mostly apparent for procedural requirements such as country environmental profiles (which are either non-existent or grossly outdated) and climate risk assessments (which are often unknown). Hence, stronger mainstreaming efforts are mostly hampered by a persistent limitation in terms of in-house capacity.

The critical approach to the nexus pointed out that adaptation to climate change in a development context is primarily framed in terms of the potentially catastrophic consequences climate change might harbor for developing countries. Article 2 looked at the discourse linking development efforts with climate change in EU policy documents, and found framings of climate change as a threat to human security and growth. Regarding the former, climate change is depicted as a threat to individual livelihoods resulting from an expected increase in natural disasters. This is to be countered by building resilience in developing countries, with the meaning of resilience fluctuating between purely techno-scientific and more contextualized, vulnerability-based conceptions. Regarding the latter, the growth frame constructs developing countries as having to build enabling environments for attracting climate-related investments and technologies. In addition, both the human security and growth frame were identified as conceptualized based on a top-down perspective, showcasing very little attention to local agency.

Article 3 reiterated many of these discursive constructions in the context of the GCCA, while also sharpening some insights provided in article 2. First of all, the importance of resilience was reconfirmed as central in EU discourse on the nexus, and was more clearly linked to a techno-scientific conception of adaptation with a strong emphasis on scientific knowledge production. Second, securitizing tendencies were also apparent with regards to the GCCA and also more 'realist' in nature, pointing at potential climate change-induced destabilizations and conflicts on a regional scale, while also directly linking it to EU security interests. In addition, article 3 connected these discursive constructions to concrete policy techniques employed by the agency, in order to uncover power effects that stem from it. By using the concept of governmentality, I identified a responsabilization of partner countries in terms of

accepting and implementing an EU-determined vision on climate resilience, while the potential for adaptation to alter EU development efforts is mostly silenced. Indeed, the power effects hidden within the GCCAs functioning create what could provocatively be called a *strait-jacket* of knowledge production. Partner countries are bound by pre-defined notions of climate vulnerability, climate adaptation and desirable adaptation outcomes.

What binds the institutionalist and critical perspectives together is the absence of transformativity in this integration exercise. Adaptation could potentially invoke a system change in development, operating as a vector for aid activities re-engaging themselves with the power relations that influence people's access to – among other things – resources and decision-making structures, which in the end co-determine their adaptive capacity. Moreover, it could even serve some emancipatory purpose by incorporating alternative epistemologies on adaptation to climate change, rooted in the context in which they ought to be implemented. Yet, evidence of such transformative approaches are largely absent in both the institutionalist as well as the critical understanding provided in this dissertation. First of all, both perspectives point to a mainstreaming exercise in which adaptation is *retrofitted* into existing development rationales, instead of serving as a real vector for change in this regard. Institutionally, the focus lies predominantly on finding win-win approaches between adaptation and sectoral activities. Hence, mainstreaming efforts are confined to sectoral activities which are most evidently linked to climate change and climate vulnerability. Yet, even within these sectors, climate change is never treated as a priority with the potential of redefining sectoral intervention strategies altogether. Discursively, climate change adaptation is framed within the parameters of existing development rationales like growth and security.

Second, both perspectives point at a predominantly **top-down mainstreaming rationale**. Institutionally, mainstreaming climate change adaptation is pursued through the creation of a mainstreaming 'toolbox' with dedicated procedures by the Commission, as well as by altering the financial incentive structure on the highest level – through the 20% norm for climate compatible financing. In addition, article 3 on the

GCCA also showed that the meaning of adaptation and climate vulnerability in the context of development cooperation is constituted by the Commission and then translated into policy tools in which this meaning is transposed to and perpetuated by GCCA partner countries. These have no choice but to adopt the meaning contained within these techniques in order to become eligible for assistance.

## 2.2 Different layers of understanding

Apart from the fact that parallel conclusions can be drawn from both theoretical perspectives underpinning this dissertation, they also represent different 'layers' of understanding the integration of adaptation in EU aid activities. These layers range from more 'shallow' institutionalist explanations for current mainstreaming efforts in EU development cooperation, to more fundamental explanations based on the political inclinations that underpin mainstreaming efforts. In the introduction, I described this dissertation in terms of combining positivist and interpretivist epistemologies. This implies that I depart from the ontological premise of a shared, yet inter-subjective reality. As to fully understand this reality, one needs to combine both a factual understanding of a certain institutional reality with an understanding of the subjective or political understandings that determined how these particular institutions came to be. As I have indicated several times in the course of this dissertation, the two overarching perspectives used within this PhD thesis represent these two layers of understanding.

I argue that the way in which adaptation is 'imagined' as a development issue influences the institutional reality that is created in order to implement it within EU development cooperation. The previous section made clear that there are no signs of any transformative impact of adaptation in the context of EU development cooperation. Existing development paradigms such as growth and security are used to provide meaning to adaptation as a development challenge, and the responsibility for 'change' is almost entirely projected upon EU partner countries in the Global South. Combining this with the fact that adaptation mainstreaming is pursued in an almost purely top-down fashion, it is of no surprise that the institutional structures erected for implementing this mainstreaming rationale are not able to achieve a prioritization



of adaptation in concrete aid activities. In other words, the way in which adaptation is imagined as a development challenge within the Commission generates an institutional reality which leaves very little room for it to invoke a system change in development cooperation.

This lack of transformativity is thus also implicitly recognizable in the institutional aspects of mainstreaming as described in article 1. Aid practitioners in EU delegations are expected to generate a sense of climate awareness through a series of procedural and organizational requirements, which feed the perception of adaptation as 'just another requirement' and mainstreaming it in sectoral activities as a way of 'keeping Brussels happy'. Climate focal persons in individual delegations can play an important role, but their relevance and contribution to the overall mainstreaming effort is not structural, as it is strongly dependent on personal motivations in this regard. Apart from these requirements, very little additional capacity is created in order to integrate adaptation in aid activities in a more fundamental fashion.

The GCCA seems to be the most promising development in this regard, something which was also indicated in article 1. However, not only is its funding still rather limited in light of the scale of climate finance that is needed, article 3 also showed that this self-declared 'innovative' agency does not add any real substance to the Commission's overall mainstreaming rationale. For one, GCCA discourse echoes many of the discursive constructions identified in the overall Commission discourse on the climate-development nexus. Moreover, the discursive constructions and policy techniques identified in the context of the GCCA are mainly preoccupied with the responsibility of partner countries in evoking change, and far less so with change within EU development cooperation itself.

In sum, the three papers presented within this dissertation are mutually connected and provide a coherent and layered understanding of the climate-development nexus within the EU. On the most fundamental level, the political understanding of adaptation mainstreaming in development fails to imagine it as a transformative issue for aid activities. This translates into an institutional reality within the Commission in which the mainstreaming rationale is operationalized as another cross-cutting

requirement for practitioners in delegations to be taken into account through procedural requirements and organizational innovations. However, this institutional context, despite the presence of self-proclaimed innovative agencies like the GCCA, lacks any substantial capacity in order to fundamentally alter existing development paradigms.

### **3. Further reflections**

In this section, I will further elaborate on a range of overarching debates that correspond with the findings presented within this dissertation. Although the subjects of these debates were not directly targeted through the conducted research, the results of this PhD research do indirectly touch upon them. More specifically, I will highlight three different aspects that I feel are important to further elaborate upon. First of all, I will discuss the implications of this research for our understanding of the EU as a leading international actor on both climate change and development cooperation, as these role conceptions were the main arguments for rendering the EU an interesting case for investigating climate mainstreaming. Second, I will further explore the complex relationship between ‘scientific’ and ‘local knowledge for climate change adaptation, building on my problematization of quantified and scientific forms of knowledge production in article 3. Third, I will elaborate on the persistence of a ‘grey zone’ between Official Development Assistance and climate financing, an observation that is also implicitly confirmed through this research and is needed in order to provide a truly comprehensive picture of climate change mainstreaming in EU development cooperation.

#### **3.1 Implications for the EU as an international climate actor**

From the onset, the idea of the EU being considered a leading actor within both the international climate change regime and the international development regime was one of the main legitimizations of investigating the climate-development nexus within this context. Hence, this section is dedicated to further exploring how the findings presented in this dissertation impact these role conceptions and how they provide a contribution to the literature in this regard. First of all, I will elaborate on the relevance of the formulated research results in light of the EU role conception as an international

climate change leader. Subsequently, I will engage with the literature on the EU as an international development actor, and discuss the research findings in light of the debate on the *securitization* of EU aid and some of the recent evolutions in EU development policy.

### ***3.1.1 The EU as an international climate leader***

Although this dissertation is focused on a very specific part of EU external climate action, the findings presented throughout this research are certainly relevant within this overarching policy domain as well. The literature on EU external climate change policies has always revolved strongly around the concept of EU climate *leadership* (cf. Gupta & Ringius 2001; Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013). Because of its history of strong directional leadership by implementing innovative and ambitious internal climate policies, the expectation was that I would find traces of this ambitious stance towards climate governance in its external policies as well.

What I found is a development policy that is indeed increasingly taking climate change adaptation into account. Moreover, when comparing the assessment of climate mainstreaming in this PhD to earlier ones (e.g. European Court of Auditors 2006), it is also clear that mainstreaming efforts have improved in the current aid cycle. For example, whereas many country strategies in the previous cycle did not even mention climate change as a cross-cutting issue for EU development work, the assessed NIPs in article 1 show that all delegations at least to some extent take climate change adaptation into account. This rise in the salience of climate change as a development issue also corresponds with the 'lead actor' role conception as put forward by Bäckstrand & Elgström (2013), as this implies an increasing attention towards establishing stronger relations with developing countries.

However, when incorporating the insights provided by the more critical investigations into the EU's mainstreaming rationale, I can also shed some new light on this leadership role. The fact that the EU provides meaning to adaptation in the context of existing development paradigms and downplays the transformative potential of adaptation on its development efforts, already nuances its ambitions in terms of adaptation mainstreaming. Also institutionally, little evidence was found of

‘prioritization’ in mainstreaming activities within different EU delegations. Hence, it is safe to conclude that EU directional leadership in this regard is not pursued to the extent that adaptation becomes a *game changer* for development cooperation.

Moreover, the omnipresence of the resilience concept in EU external climate policies also has some implications for EU climate leadership. As was already stated in article 3 on the GCCA, resilience effectively erases power imbalances that are at the core of the problematique of international climate change: the fact that industrialized countries are responsible for causing climate change due to their historical emissions record gives them the prime responsibility to mitigate its further reinforcement and to assist developing countries in adapting to its effects. Both for mitigation and adaptation, the concept of resilience generates remarkable power effects. Regarding mitigation, the contingency and dismal worldview that is projected through the concept, implies that developing countries need to adapt to a future world in which the impacts of climate change are inevitable. Regarding adaptation, the concept shifts the responsibility for building adaptive capacity squarely to countries vulnerable to the effects of climate change, while again silencing the role of industrialized countries in this regard. This was also one of the main conclusions of article 3.

The constant and ubiquitous use of resilience within the EU’s external climate change discourse is thus problematic from the viewpoint of EU climate leadership. It causes a fundamental inconsistency in its stance regarding climate change. On the one hand, the pursuit of directional leadership in climate mitigation and the EU’s constant re-affirmation of its own ambitions in this regard suggest that mitigation remains the prime objective within the international climate change regime. Further climate change needs to be avoided at all cost, and industrialized countries – of which quite a few are EU member states – need to do whatever they can to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard. On the other hand, the central role of resilience in EU external climate policies – and EU foreign policy in general – depoliticizes this mitigation responsibility of industrialized countries. One could argue that a sensible climate strategy needs to have both mitigation targets as well as a resilience strategy. Yet, in light of a growing of accounts of the EU struggling to uphold its ambition in terms of mitigation policies

(e.g. Rueter & Russel 2017; van der Heijden 2017), I argue that the centrality of resilience in EU external climate policies can be considered problematic due to its depoliticizing effects in this regard. It diminishes the continuous responsibility the EU and other historical polluters have in maintaining ambitious and stringent mitigation targets. Article 2 and 3 provided a detailed account of how these mechanisms for shifting responsibilities from the EU to partner countries in the Global South manifest themselves both in discourse and concrete policy techniques.

### *3.1.2 The EU as an international development actor*

One of the main findings within this dissertation is the observation that adaptation is retrofitted in existing development paradigms, which I have described as revolving mainly around notions of security and growth. In order to fully grasp the implications of this finding, it is important to get a good image of how these paradigms evolved in recent years. Within the following paragraphs, I will therefore first elaborate on the debate regarding the *securitization* of EU development cooperation and the increasing importance of strategic considerations in EU development cooperation. Subsequently, I will outline recent evolutions within the growth-paradigm, focusing specifically on a growing importance of the private sector as a source of development assistance.

First of all, the literature on the EU as an international development actor contains a long-standing preoccupation with the **securitization** of EU development cooperation (cf. Bagoyoko & Gibert 2009; Gänzle 2012; Keukeleire & Raube 2013). In short, while some authors have recommended the linking of security and development concerns in order to come to a more coherent development policy towards potentially unstable countries, others have warned for the subordination of the development agenda to donor-related security concerns (Chandler 2007: 363). Hence, securitization of development cooperation bears the risk of a primacy of security concerns over poverty reduction efforts (Del Biondo et al. 2012: 129). Within the context of EU development cooperation, scholars have looked for manifestations of securitization in discourse, institutional architecture and concrete policy instruments (cf. Keukeleire & Raube 2013; Del Biondo et al. 2012). These studies have identified a growing convergence of

development- and security concerns within the EU over the years, both institutionally and discursively.

Institutionally, the entanglement of security concerns with development cooperation became strongly apparent after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which erased the pillar structure of EU external policies and created the EEAS as the new central locus in this regard. The fact that the post-Lisbon institutional setup of EU external action granted the EEAS a foothold in the programming of development aid was seen by some as a formalization of what was already a creeping securitization within EU development cooperation (Furness & Gänzle 2016; Keukeleire & Raube 2013). Discursively, the literature also identifies a clear link between development and security in discourse represented within important documents such as the Consensus for Development, once again reiterating the risk that development objectives may be compromised in favor of security concerns.

The insights provided in this dissertation, especially in article 2 and 3, further add to these observations. Institutionally, this dissertation identified traces of securitization through the increasing interlinkage of the EEAS and relevant Commission agencies like DG DEVCO and DG CLIMA. The most important manifestation of this link is the Green Diplomacy Network (GDN), which was already formally established in 2003, but received renewed impetus with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, its subsequent integration in the EEAS and the EU's switch to a lead actor role in the run-up to Paris (Torney & Cross 2018; Youngs 2014). With a network that is integrated within both national representations and EU Delegations in third countries, the GDN is mostly focused on promoting the EU position on climate- and environmental issues, as well as on gathering intelligence on the stances of third countries in this regard (Ujvari 2016). Apart from diplomacy, security interests also play a more prominent role in the GDN in recent years. One example in this regard is the fact that the EEAS organizes regular trainings for foreign policy officials on the link between security and climate change and commissioned numerous studies in this regard (Youngs 2014: 5). Furthermore, this increasing attention towards security also trickles down in the EU's development rationale. Linking the GDN to the GCCA – which is one of the changes

that was implemented in the initiation of the new GCCA+ phase – suggests that development cooperation is also envisioned as a tool for pursuing foreign policy objectives related to climate change.

Regarding discursive securitization, article 2 and 3 clearly indicated the presence of both human- and realist security frames within the discourse of the Commission in general, and the GCCA in particular. The peculiar functioning of climate resilience within these security frames is particularly interesting. Arguably, its discursive construction within EU development cooperation incorporates notions of both human security and realist security. Regarding the former, resilience mostly operates in the context of disaster risk reduction. Hence, building resilience in this regard means the capacity of communities to withstand to the impacts of climate change. Regarding the latter, building resilience is seen as needed in light of the potential destabilization and violent conflict that could erupt as a result of climate change, and which could also affect the EU through increased migration, terrorism and other potential security threats.

Hence, climate resilience operates as a truly versatile discursive construction, binding these human and realist security concerns together in one worldview. Arguably, resilience can be conceived as the pinnacle of securitization on a discursive level, as it elevates a permanent state of insecurity to become the very basis on which problem definitions and policy solutions are imagined and created (Bourbeau 2015). As such, it depoliticizes securitization: the introduction of security arguments within the climate-development sphere is no longer labelled a conscious policy decision, but is depicted as a natural, apolitical reaction to a world which is increasingly contingent and unsafe. Moreover, the question always comes up as to which interests are served through such forms of securitization. Once again, resilience might very well shift the limelight from the security of people affected by climate change to the security of the EU itself and further depoliticize the historical responsibility of industrialized countries in causing climate change in the first place.

As such, the seemingly growing entanglement of adaptation with security interests, funneled through elusive concepts like resilience, provides an interesting new

development for the literature dealing with the securitization of EU development aid. However, as this dissertation did not engage with policy practices, I did not identify any concrete signs of securitization in this regard. Hence, I am not able to claim that current adaptation assistance by the EU is already primarily aimed at serving EU security interests. According to Youngs (2014), securitization has not been transposed yet from the discursive to the governance level, due to constant interference of short-term crises that garner attention. Yet, the fact remains that early signs of this are indeed manifesting themselves in EU discourse. The persistence of such discursive legitimizations for adaptation in the Global South by pointing at EU security interests could very well render such linkages “normal” in the long term, and generate a spill-over in EU development practices.

This securitization dynamic is symptomatic of the current evolutions noticeable in EU development cooperation in general. The launch of the new EU Global Strategy in 2016 has further strengthened the image of EU foreign policy, EU strategic objectives and EU development policy as communicating vessels. Currently, the negotiations on the new Multi-annual Financial Framework again reveal that the main drivers behind development cooperation are not the SDGs, but perceived threats of instability, insecurity and a changing geopolitical landscape (Sherrif & Di Ciommo 2018). However, even the renewed European Consensus for Development (2017), which is explicitly embedded within the SDG framework, has been criticized for propagating a development rationale that is mainly instrumentalized for tackling security interests and irregular migration (Osborn 2017). The fact that the new Consensus also heavily relies on the concept of resilience, further adds to this point. Also in practice, examples such as allowing expenditures related to hosting refugees within European member states to be classified as ODA point out that the purpose of providing ODA is increasingly becoming diluted. Moreover, the aim to simplify the structures of EU external spending further invoke concern among NGOs that development assistance is being stripped bare in favor of foreign policy objectives (Fox 2018).



At the same time, the presence of a **growth frame** within the discourse surrounding the nexus can be placed within the overarching evolution of development cooperation being increasingly left to the private sector. Public-private constructions such as blending mechanisms for attracting private investments for development purposes in the Global South have been around for years. However, in recent years, private financing for development is increasingly being perceived as a silver bullet for financing development projects (Brachet & Romero 2018). Once again, the new European Consensus for Development echoes strongly this belief in the power of climate financing, advocating an increase in the use of private and blended ODA within EU aid activities (Osborn 2017; European Commission 2017). In practice, the current expansion of the European External Investment Plan to the realm of development cooperation through the European Fund for Sustainable Development, which is also mainly aimed at stimulating private investments in the Global South, is a clear sign that this evolution is in fact taking place (ibid.; Chadwick 2017). Once again, questions can be raised whether diminishing ODA numbers within the EU can be replaced by increasing private investments, given the fact that commercial interests will always be to a certain extent at odds with the rationale behind the provision of ODA.

I would argue that wicked problems like climate change can give new impetus to the relevance of development cooperation within the EU. The continuous emphasis on adaptation being able to invoke a system change in development throughout this dissertation implies that climate change could serve as a way for the development community to reinvent itself, focusing more on structural factors that leave people poor and vulnerable to climate change in the first place. This includes problems related to inequality, injustice and lack of agency, ranging from the international to the local level. In practice, recent evolutions on both the international (e.g. the SDGs) and the European level (the 20% norm for climate compatible financing) have shown that climate change has the potential to provide development cooperation with such a new sense of relevance. Future evolutions will have to determine whether it will play this role even more strongly in the future, or whether it will also succumb to the expanding pressure of aligning with EU foreign policy objectives.

### 3.2 ‘Scientific’ vs. ‘indigenous’ knowledge

A second issue on which I would like to elaborate further in this concluding chapter, is the link between adaptation assistance in the context of development cooperation and the dominance of scientific or technocratic approaches in this regard. I realize that combining post-structuralist theories like governmentality with a problematization of scientific approaches towards adaptation assistance by the EU might evoke an image of a relativistic stance towards science. Indeed, arguments linked to problematizing science or based on notions of ‘scientism’ (Boudry & Pigliucci 2018) are vulnerable to criticisms. They are easily accused of rejecting the idea of scientific inquiry altogether, labelling it simply one way to come to a particular truth on a particular issue. As Marcel Kuntz (2012) rhetorically puts it: “If all truths are equal, who cares what science has to say?”

I do not want to engage with the whole postmodernism vs. post-positivism debate. Yet, as I do problematize the scientific approach towards adaptation assistance within EU external action as reproducing a certain ‘truth’ on adaptation, thus invoking real power effects, I do feel that I need to reflect on it in order to fully clarify what I mean by this. First of all, this PhD research is by no means an endorsement for post-structuralist ontology. The fact that I combine positivist and post-positivist epistemologies throughout this PhD thesis, proves that this research is still rooted in a sense of a shared reality. From the onset, I considered the critical- and post-structuralist approaches towards the nexus mainly as a source of inspiration in order to shed a new and innovative light on CPI in the context of EU development cooperation. Thus, their ontological implications were of no direct importance in the course of this research.

My problematization of the technocratic and scientific approach towards adaptation assistance thus does not lie in questioning the ontological basis of scientific inquiry, rejecting the fact that it can lead to objective truth. What I do contest is the idea that invoking scientific credentials in the context of policy making automatically renders such policies objective and ideologically neutral. What is considered science-based policy making, might very well reflect and perpetuate certain power imbalances and

ideological biases. In this case, I found that the scientific underpinnings of adaptation assistance in the context of the GCCA (i) requires partner countries to define their vulnerability to climate change in quantified terms, based on the EU's understanding of the concept; (ii) streamlines the creation of knowledge on adaptation through the active promotion and implementation of Monitoring & Evaluation systems and (iii) rewards countries with greater capacity and greater potential to implement such forms of adaptation through the system of upscaling.

What could alternative conceptions of adaptation assistance in the context of development cooperation consist of? Often, studies advocate a reappraisal of local or 'indigenous' knowledge in this regard (Nyong et al. 2007; Anik & Khan 2012). Put simply, such arguments start from the idea that local communities have developed their own ways of coping with climate- and weather variabilities, and that this is an important resource that should not be ignored in the context of designing adaptation projects and creating knowledge on what constitutes 'good' adaptational practices. Although often departing from a genuine will to emancipate marginalized perspectives on climate vulnerability and adaptation, such problematizations carry in themselves a number of risks. Most importantly, they perpetuate the limitation of such forms of knowledge to the 'local' or the 'traditional'. This seems to suggest that local communities are intellectually and spatially confined, without access to any forms of exchange or contact with other groups who might uphold different epistemologies in this regard (Agrawal 1995; Cameron 2012). Therefore, such critical and problematizing accounts can in themselves be criticized for perpetuating power imbalances, as they are at risk of depicting the knowledge of local communities to be limited to this local and traditional realm, as opposed to the universal, modern and scientific nature of 'Western' knowledge. Indeed, any knowledge, including what is commonly placed under the denominator of Western or scientific knowledge, can be considered local (cf. Cruikshank 2014). Therefore, the act of creating knowledge on climate change adaptation should not be based on a senseless promotion of the local or the traditional, but should rather be preoccupied with questions of how to merge different forms of 'localized' knowledge into hybrid systems of inquiry for the sake of governance. Such conceptualizations reinstate knowledge as a relational product and a consequence of

dialogue, and move away from the idea that local communities are spatially and intellectually confined.

As a way of escaping this power imbalance, academics and policy makers alike need to perceive concepts like vulnerability, now often giving rise to technocratic approaches to adaptation assistance, as fundamentally embedded in social relations, cultural provisions and historical evolutions (Bankoff & Hilhorst 2004). Indeed, in contrast to notions of risk and disaster giving rise to techno-scientific fixes in order to prevent or mitigate climate impacts, one needs to recognize that “A disaster is a historical event, and the aftermath of a disaster is a process of coming to grips with history” (Oliver-Smith as cited in Bankoff & Hilhorst 2004: 4). Hence, building knowledge on adaptation needs to be based on a strong sense of co-creation, in order to come to a holistic conception of both the drivers of vulnerability and the possible options for adaptation. This equality needs to be pursued both discursively as well as in practice, in order to escape power imbalances rooted in dichotomies of the Western vs. the local.

Linking back to the research conducted in this dissertation, it is clear that these broader and more inclusive conceptions of vulnerability and adaptation are still a blind spot within the nexus between adaptation and EU development cooperation. Although the mission statement of the GCCA is based on a notion of innovative policy making within the nexus, it is clear that there is still much room for creating a more balanced approach towards knowledge creation in this regard. Although a small thematic agency, the GCCA could make a real difference here and therefore serve as a source of inspiration towards other organizations, both within as well as outside the EU. Regarding the former, the GCCA is in multiple ways connected with EU delegations and can also provide technical assistance for adaptation mainstreaming in this context. Hence, it could fulfil a central role in climate mainstreaming in terms of promoting such alternative paradigms throughout the geographical component of EU development cooperation as well. Regarding the latter, it could provide inspiration to other, non-EU donor organizations and NGOs through its extensive (and increasing) outreach initiatives.

### 3.3 Climate financing and ODA

This PhD dissertation was entirely dedicated to the integration of climate change adaptation in EU development cooperation. This was based on the observation that linkages between adaptation and aid activities are diverse and multi-layered, and that adaptation thus can have a fundamental impact on the way development cooperation is perceived and pursued. However, although I argued at various points in this dissertation that adaptation and development cannot be separated *conceptually*, I would also argue that they should be separated *financially*. For one, development aid is primarily motivated by a sense of international solidarity, while climate financing should be a direct compensation for the historical responsibility of industrialized countries for causing climate change. An elephant in the room in this approach to the nexus is therefore the grey area that persists between adaptation *aid* (in the sense of ODA) on the one hand, and adaptation *financing* on the other (Betzold & Weiler 2018). The conceptual overlap between both development and adaptation cannot be an excuse for diverting existing ODA streams to provide adaptation assistance. Hence, in order to provide a complete picture on how adaptation mainstreaming is pursued within EU development cooperation, I will also elaborate on the findings provided within this dissertation regarding this financial dimension. Institutionally, this links up with the importance of Rio Markers in the EU's mainstreaming exercise and the fact that many of the institutional innovations in recent years, such as the 20% norm and the GCCA, are funded with ODA. From a critical perspective, I will argue that agencies like the GCCA perpetuate the current complexity of the climate financing landscape vis-à-vis their partner countries.

One of the pillars of the international climate regime is the idea that compensatory resources for developing countries in order to assist them in both mitigation and adaptation should be new and additional (UNCTAD 2015). In short, the idea of additionality thus calls for donors not to reconvert their ODA streams in order to provide financing for climate-related assistance in developing countries. Yet, additionality of climate financing in relation to ODA remains an ongoing debate until this day, sparking many interpretations on how it should be perceived (cf. Brown et al. 2010). As a result, few – if any – donors today have set clear demarcations between

their ODA and climate financing streams, resulting in a field of tension between both forms of financing.

It is of course not possible to settle the discussion on additionality in this concluding chapter, as this is still one of the main outstanding issues dominating international climate negotiations in the post-Paris era. Also within the EU, it is clear that finding a workable operationalization of the additionality principle is still a distant dream. Although not directly investigated throughout this dissertation, I did find strong evidence pointing at the persistence of this 'grey' area in EU development cooperation as well. For one, the research conducted for article 1 showed that monitoring climate-related financial assistance in EU development cooperation is mainly done through the use of Rio Markers<sup>111</sup>, as is the case in most donor countries (Adelle et al. 2018). In short, this tool allows for marking development projects in light of their contribution to climate change mitigation or adaptation. Projects are Rio Marked '1' if mitigation or adaptation is a significant objective of a project, or marked '2' if it is the principal objective (Brown et al. 2010). In recent years, the use of the Rio Marker methodology has been subjected to increased criticism. The used categories (significant and principal) are open for interpretation among different donor agencies, which makes it difficult to compare them in terms of provided climate financing (Brown et al. 2010). It is therefore perfectly possible for aid projects having little or no link to climate change to be Rio marked as significantly contributing to mitigation or adaptation. Furthermore, the relation between the Rio Markers and additionality of climate financing is also ill-defined, once again leaving too much space for interpretation by the donor agencies using them. Finally, the methodology also allows for projects being marked as addressing several of the Rio Markers simultaneously, allowing for the same financial pledge to be counted up to four times as contributing to different Rio conventions (Roberts & Weikman 2017).

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<sup>111</sup> This methodology for tracing climate-related aid towards developing countries originates within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).

Second, the imposed norm for climate compatible financing within the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial framework earmarks 20% of the EU development cooperation budget for climate-related expenditures. Although highlighted in article 1 as a major incentive for climate mainstreaming among EU delegations, it does not imply *additional* financial capacity for tackling climate change in EU development cooperation. Therefore, it could be criticized as diverting ODA within the EU for the sake of providing climate financing. Finally, the GCCA is also dubiously positioned in this grey area, as it receives most of its financing from EU development programmes such as the EDF and the DCI.

Regardless of how one defines additionality, there is a widespread consensus that more climate financing is needed fast. Not only is climate finance crucial in light of the enormous financial pressure climate change will put on countries in the Global South, it is also needed to prevent additional strain on already diminishing ODA numbers flowing to the world's poorest countries (Kwakkenbos 2018). The international community has agreed to strive towards an annual capacity for climate financing of 100 billion USD by 2020. However, the massive proliferation of both public and private funding agencies for providing climate financing has created a notoriously complex and fragmented institutional landscape. While the Green Climate Fund (GCF), established in 2011, was created for the purpose of bringing a central locus in this chaotic whole, it has to this day not managed to live up to its expectations in this regard (Kumar 2015; Eckstein 2017). Hence, developing countries are still forced to turn to a plethora of different agencies in order to receive climate financing, each employing their own bureaucratic procedures and conditions. Agencies like the GCCA can be considered part of this proliferation, and even play a role in perpetuating this fragmented landscape. Indeed, the fact GCCA engages in capacity building in partner countries for the sake of attracting public and private climate financing can be problematized from this angle. Once again, it shifts responsibilities in this regard to developing countries themselves, as they need to build their own capacity in order to 'attract' funding that is entitled to them in the first place. Thus, such capacity building efforts can be considered a form of socialization in order for such countries to accept the current state of the international climate financing architecture. Furthermore, the

exploration of the GCCAs activities has clearly shown that within these agencies, power effects are always a fundamental part of their functioning.

In sum, a lot of work remains to be done in order to create a fair and equitable climate financing system in which (i) both ODA and climate financing are ensured and do not compete with each other for scarce funding; (ii) developing countries can easily access climate financing, without having to engage in building capacity in order to attract investments from a lop-sided international system and (iii) a transparent and fair methodology is created in order to track climate financing, both from public and private sources. For the EU specifically, I would argue that it could do much more given the fact that it also perceives itself as a climate leader in this regard. For one, it could push for more stringent and streamlined rules in terms of additionality, both at the UNFCCC level and vis-à-vis its own member states. Furthermore, it could also pursue stronger directional leadership by providing clarity on how it pursues additionality within its own climate-related assistance vis-à-vis partner countries.

#### **4. Avenues for future research**

Although this dissertation has provided new and thought-provoking empirical and theoretical insights into the climate-development nexus in the context of the EU, it is not without its flaws and limitations. Therefore, this section is dedicated to formulating a future research agenda that builds upon this research project and its inevitable imperfections. Within the following paragraphs, I will therefore outline a selection of potential avenues for further research. These are (i) field-based studies in order to advance our understanding of the institutional as well as political underpinnings of climate change mainstreaming; (ii) an inquiry into the climate-development nexus starting from the concept of EU external perception and (iii) a transdisciplinary analysis of CPI as a policy outcome.



## 4.1 Field-based methods for the study of the climate-development nexus

First of all, the research conducted throughout this PhD project remains to a certain extent overarching, as it does not look into the implementation of EU development policy at the micro-level. This is related to a dominance of desk-based methods and the absence of field work as a form of data inquiry. Several practical reasons can be formulated to explain this absence of field work in this PhD project. Regarding the analysis of climate mainstreaming in EU delegations, field work was practically unfeasible. My aim here was to create a broad overview of mainstreaming efforts throughout different EU delegations in Sub-Saharan African countries. Face-to-face interviews with officials from nine different countries would have been too much of an endeavor, and an in-depth case study of mainstreaming efforts in one or two EU delegations would have severely altered the goal of article 1. In the end, I am convinced that maintaining the broad scope of data inquiry in 9 different EU delegations and the choice for interviews via telephone/Skype was the right one. It allowed me to make broader claims about the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of certain approaches towards climate change mainstreaming as intended by the Commission, which is the main strength of article 1. I would not have been able to uphold the ability to formulate broad policy-relevant conclusions with data from only one or two case studies.

Regarding governmentality, my decision to switch to Foucauldian research happened at quite a late stage of the overall PhD project. Therefore, extensive field work in this phase of the PhD would have once again been too ambitious. Aside from the time invested in order to fully understand the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of governmentality, finding good case studies for a governmentality analysis would have also taken a lot of preparation. In addition, in order to gather a sufficient amount of data in order to fully explore governmentality in such local settings, an extensive period of field work would also have been required. Hence, I chose to pursue what could be considered a 'governmentality light' analysis in my study of the GCCA. Inspired by a similar study conducted by Kurki (2011) on the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), I identified hidden power effects in the

design and policy architecture of the GCCA, without delving into the concrete implementation of GCCA-supported projects.

Future research could take this to the next level by engaging with the micro-level of this integration process, looking specifically at its implementation in the field. From an institutionalist perspective, this could for instance lead to an inquiry into how the perceived harmonization of aid activities with climate change adaptation (cf. article 1) translates into concrete development projects. This could provide a better insight in how mainstreaming 'travels' throughout different stages of the policy cycle. Is the observed high level of climate mainstreaming in the early stages of the policy cycle upheld in the actual implementation of such projects? Or is climate change adaptation at risk of becoming diluted further down the policy cycle? Furthermore, fieldwork could also provide the literature with a better insight in the enabling and constraining factors that influence mainstreaming efforts within executive agencies like EU delegations. Examples of potentially interesting topics in this regard are the importance of leadership within individual delegations, the existence of organizational routines in order to further implement the mainstreaming rationale and the cooperation and the relationship with relevant administrations within the partner country. Especially in the latter case, field research could really generate added value. This is because the importance of the partner country context in determining climate mainstreaming levels is still a 'black box' within the literature.

In addition, the analytical potential of the governmentality concept could also be further excavated using field-based methods. As I explain in more detail in article 3 and the Annex to this dissertation, governmentality research relies on a detailed knowledge of a particular micro-empirical setting, in order to identify a complex interplay of power relations. Hence, major empirical contributions could be provided through this governmentality-field research tandem. For one, they could engage with the 'dialogue' on climate change between EU delegations and their partner country counterparts. This could provide us with a better image on how the EU positions itself vis-à-vis partner countries and how power relations are interwoven in this climate-based outreach exercise. Second, such research could also engage with the dynamic

between EU development practice and the local level, possibly approaching this topic through the perspective of 'merging' knowledge systems, as sketched out in the previous section. Do local communities have agency in terms of ascribing meaning to adaptation in their own specific setting? Are there concrete attempts at coming to 'hybrid' forms of knowledge on vulnerability and adaptation? Finally, future research could also engage with the notion of counter-conduct in this regard, looking specifically at how dominant perspectives of climate adaptation assistance – through notions of growth, security and techno-scientific interventions – are resisted and potentially altered through the interaction with the local settings in which projects are implemented.

## 4.2 EU external perception

A second observation is that this dissertation predominantly looked at the nexus from the perspective of the EU itself. Alternatively, the empirical field of the EU climate-development nexus could be approached from the perspective of EU partner countries, possibly departing from the concept of EU external perception (cf. Larsen 2014; Lucarelli 2014; Keuleers 2015). Specifically within the field of EU external climate policy, some pioneer work has been done in this regard by Torney (2014), who specifically looks at the perception of EU climate leadership in UNFCCC negotiations with other major actors in this context. Yet, this specific body of literature is still in its infancy and could greatly benefit from additional empirical investigations into the different sub-domains of EU external climate action. This could further provide a counterweight against the dominant narratives of the EU as a normatively driven climate leader on the international stage.

Considering the EU climate-development nexus, future research could for example look at how the EU is perceived by third countries as a provider of climate financing and support. Do EU partner countries evaluate its assistance in this regard as rather positive or negative? How does this link up with their conceptualization of international climate governance in general, and the provision of climate finance and climate-related support in particular? Such research could thus not only expand our knowledge of the EU's credibility as a climate leader beyond the formal negotiation

sessions, but also better inform us of alternative conceptualizations of the international climate change regime in non-Western settings.

### **4.3 EU climate diplomacy**

Although not directly targeted in this research, the EU's Green Diplomacy Network (GDN) was a recurring topic throughout the interviews conducted for this dissertation. Much like the GCCA, the GDN and the concept of 'green diplomacy' within the EU have so far only received very limited attention, although scholarly work in this regard is starting to grow (e.g. Torney & Cross 2018; Minas & Ntousas 2018). Climate diplomacy has been a vital part of EU external climate governance for years, and has for example played quite a substantial role in the negotiations leading up to the Paris climate agreement (Torney & Cross 2018).

Hence, in order to get a good image on how the EU tries to exert its climate leadership on the international stage, a good understanding of its climate diplomacy endeavors seems vital. Moreover, its institutional hybridity, being embedded within the EEAS, DG DEVCO and DG CLIMA at HQ-level and within EU delegations at the field level, make it interesting to see how interinstitutional links influence EU external climate policy. This links up with some of the issues raised in section 3.2 on the future of EU development cooperation: to what extent will the growing importance of climate change as a foreign policy objective within the EU generate spill-over effects in other domains like development cooperation? And will this lead to EU interests like containing climate-induced migration and ensuring security along the EU borders trickling down into aid assistance?

### **4.4 Transdisciplinarity in the study of CPI as a policy outcome**

Finally, I would like to link back to the conceptualization outlined in the introduction distinguishing between climate policy integration as a policy principle, a policy process or a policy outcome. Within this dissertation, I have limited myself to the former two conceptualizations of CPI. The rationale behind this delineation stems from the fact that measuring the impact of CPI measures on the track record of assisted actors in terms of adaptation and/or mitigation is a highly complex and transdisciplinary endeavor. Hence, I will end this section by promoting such

transdisciplinary perspectives on the integration of climate change in EU development cooperation. Combining policy analyses of mainstreaming efforts with inquiries rooted in environmental sciences and possibly even ethnographic studies involving local communities could greatly enhance our knowledge of how mainstreaming is pursued, how effective it is and how it could be improved.

Possibilities in terms of empirical combinations in this regard are almost endless. Researchers could for example investigate the link between ecosystem management measures pursued by donors (e.g. in the area of forestry or sustainable agriculture) and the actual impact in terms of strengthening local ecosystems. As a concrete empirical case, researchers could put global market mechanisms (such as REDD+) to the test, and cross-check management approaches in this regard in light of their impact on biodiversity and ecosystem values. Moreover, combining such research with ethnographic studies could also inform us on how such mainstreaming measures influence local communities in terms of social relationships and adaptive capacity. This could potentially introduce a whole new dimension to the EPI and CPI literature and could provide a much needed bridge between the social- and the environmental sciences, which is arguably one of the main challenges in climate change research today.

## 5. Policy recommendations

This section is dedicated to translating the research results presented in this dissertation into policy-relevant recommendations. These can be categorized as top-down and bottom-up oriented. Regarding the former, I will further elaborate on the current context of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, and how the climate mainstreaming rationale within the EU could benefit from these overarching frameworks. Regarding the latter, I argue that the EU should aspire to better incorporate climate equity concerns and local perspectives in its adaptation assistance.

## 5.1 Top-down: adaptation mainstreaming in an evolving international context

First of all, this PhD thesis was written in the midst of two crucial international developments: the entering into force of the Paris climate agreement and the replacement of the MDGs with a new set of SDGs. Based on the insights provided in this dissertation, it is safe to say that this new international context contains both promises and pitfalls for climate mainstreaming in an EU context. The most important pitfall being the extremely broad scope of the SDGs as a framework for aid activities, which could very well put a crippling weight on what are in many cases already overburdened aid practitioners in EU delegations. Due to their scope, the SDGs evoke a sense of mainstreaming in which “everything should be integrated within everything else” (Jones 2018). The implementation of the SDGs within EU development cooperation could therefore even strengthen the sense of ‘mainstreaming fatigue’ among delegations, when not met with adequate vision and resources.

Alternatively, the combination of the Paris Agreement becoming operational on the one hand, and the implementation of the SDGs on the other hand also provide a unique window of opportunity for further pushing the mainstreaming of climate change to higher levels of salience. Regarding the former, the establishment of NDCs has created a platform for all the signatory parties to the Paris Agreement to formulate their efforts in order to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change. Although the first generation of INDCs showed wide fluctuations in terms of quality and ambition, the five year pledge and review cycle inscribed within the Paris Agreement should ensure a regular update and improvement of the NDCs in this regard. Specifically for adaptation mainstreaming, these NDCs could serve as blueprints for donors in order properly identify entry points for adaptation assistance in developing countries. Regarding the latter, the SDGs are now in the process of being implemented, which implies countries translating this internationally agreed set of targets to their own respective national contexts, set clear priorities within the broad SDG agenda, and formulate concrete actions for implementation (Northrop et al. 2016).

There is international consensus that both processes cannot be perceived and implemented separately. Climate change is a pivotal challenge for successfully implementing the SDGs, while the NDCs should also be embedded within national and local development strategies in order to be fully effective (cf. Northrop et al. 2016; UNDP 2017). Therefore, the two international agendas are fundamentally interlocked, and acknowledging this among country administrations and donor agencies alike could provide additional impetus to the climate mainstreaming agenda. Aligning the NDCs and the SDGs could very well produce new and high quality mitigation- and adaptation strategies that are also fully embedded in national development planning.

This dissertation made clear that, through various channels, the EU is strongly involved in assisting partner countries carving out and implementing their mitigation and adaptation policies. Given the insights provided within this dissertation, assisting such countries in aligning the NDCs and the SDGs could prove to be beneficial for mainstreaming as well. Not only would it help in building additional expertise on climate mainstreaming by further carving out the complex interplay between climate vulnerability and sustainable development, it could also replace many of the procedural tools that are currently rendered ineffective or unknown within EU delegations. For one, a detailed NDC could already replace the often outdated or even nonexistent country environmental profiles, while a dedicated strategy on adaptation priorities within the context of the SDGs could make general guidelines like the sector scripts obsolete. This is in essence nothing more than basic subsidiarity, as it makes much more sense to organize such procedural aspects of climate mainstreaming on a higher level. Not only could this evoke an administrative simplification for EU delegations, it could also strengthen exchange of knowledge and experience among donor agencies and country administrations. Of course, not all procedures can be replaced by such overarching frameworks. Project-specific procedures like EIAs and climate risk assessments will still have to be conducted by each individual donor agency on a project-by-project basis. Yet, these could also benefit from a better understanding of the impact of climate change on sustainable development in particular countries.

However, the above reflections only account for ‘more’ mainstreaming, but do not yet reflect the potential of adaptation to invoke a system change in aid activities. Regarding this notion of transformativity, I would argue that the SDGs could further facilitate such a quantum leap in the EU’s mainstreaming rationale as well. This belief is based on some innovative principles that are in the process of becoming ‘injected’ in the 2030 agenda and the SDGs. The most well-known of these principles is the idea of ‘Planetary Boundaries’ (cf. Steffen et al. 2015; Wijkman & Rockström 2013). Based on rigorous scientific inquiry, this concept sets out limits to economic and industrial development based on their impact on climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity etc. As such, the concept explicitly advocates a development paradigm in which the idea of unabated economic growth – something which I also identified in relation to adaptation – is replaced by a sense of development within certain ecological limits (Hajer et al. 2015).

Second, the idea of a ‘Safe and Just Operating Space’ is an extension of the idea of planetary boundaries. It represents the argument that, in order to operate within these boundaries, we do not only need efficiency driving our use of natural resources, but also strive towards an equitable distribution of these resources from the international to the local level (Hajer et al. 2015). Hence, this principle connects the emphasis of sustainable development within planetary boundaries to a sense of social justice and equity. This connects strongly with the description of transformative adaptation mainstreaming as described throughout this dissertation, as this also implies a stronger preoccupation with power relations that determine the access to resources by individual or community actors in the Global South.

Finally, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development also echoes a renewed sense of bottom-up engagement with non-governmental actors. Coined by Hajer et al. (2015) as the ‘Energetic Society’, the SDGs should harbor space for participation by civil society organizations, citizens, farmers etc. in coming to new and innovative conceptions of sustainable development. Once again, this relates strongly to my elaboration on knowledge co-creation for climate adaptation above. In the following



section, I will further elaborate on how bottom-up perspectives could find entrance in EU climate mainstreaming efforts.

In sum, the international context of the potentially compatible SDGs and NDCs creates a window of opportunity for further pushing the mainstreaming agenda. Not only does this evolving international context provide an opportunity for further strengthening the current mainstreaming rationale within the European Commission, it could also serve as a catalyst for re-imaging adaptation as a transformative issue for development cooperation. This is the result of some innovative concepts that are increasingly being linked to the SDG-agenda, and which correspond strongly with the description of transformativity provided throughout this dissertation.

However, this can only work on two conditions. First of all, using this international context as a window of opportunity for strengthening mainstreaming efforts requires strong political will. Arguably, the profoundly holistic scope of the SDGs also creates the risk of development *a la carte*, in which donors link their existing aid activities to a range of individual SDGs that fit these activities best, without really altering the underlying paradigms that drive their development efforts. Hence, in order to fully unleash the ‘radical potential’ of the SDG agenda (cf. Death & Gabay 2015), donors need to imagine and implement this agenda starting from the conviction that it is in fact holistic and transformative.

Second, the rising salience on the international level and within EU headquarters has to be met with adequate resources for officials responsible for implementing them. The modest rise in the norm for climate compatible financing from 20% in the current MFF to 25% in the latest proposals for the new MFF (entering into force in 2021, cf. Climate Action Network 2018), seem to suggest that financial incentives for climate mainstreaming seems to be stalling. This is worrisome, given the importance of the 20% norm for current mainstreaming efforts (cf. article 1). In terms of human resources, this dissertation points at the lasting need for adequate mainstreaming trainings and investments in building expertise within delegations. Dedicated staff clearly makes all the difference in order to push the mainstreaming agenda within their respective

delegations. Therefore, the importance of continuous support from agencies situated at headquarters level in this regard cannot be overemphasized.

## **5.2 Bottom-up: incorporating climate justice and knowledge co-creation**

Second, the critical perspective on the nexus revealed a largely top-down mainstreaming exercise within the EU. As argued in article 3, agencies like the GCCA are very much in the driver's seat when it comes to defining vulnerability to climate change, adaptation, relevant knowledge for adaptation and strategies for monitoring and evaluation. Through various policy techniques, potential partner countries are socialized into accepting particular truths on these matters, thereby reproducing them. Many examples were provided in the course of this dissertation: among others, partner countries need to become resilient to climate impacts by safeguarding economic growth, maintaining safety and stability and building capacity in order to gather knowledge and financial assistance. To directly quote EU discourse: they need to become 'model states' in the wake of climate change, thereby accepting certain premises on what the problem is and how it can be tackled.

In order for the EU to be a truly innovative and directional actor in climate assistance, it should operate as a counterweight in this regard. Climate change adaptation is quintessentially a phenomenon that requires a bottom-up and localized response (Rayner 2010). Although the importance of combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives is to a certain extent acknowledged within the EU and the GCCA in particular, the insights provided in this dissertation suggest that there is still considerable margin for further tilting the balance towards bottom-up forms of adaptation assistance. In discourse, this could for example imply a shift towards a greater emphasis on climate justice, which was identified in article 2 as only a minor frame in EU discourse on the climate-development nexus.

Although a broad concept, a climate-justice inspired conception of adaptation could further centralize the inequality-dimension of adaptation, both in terms of the unequal distribution of climate vulnerabilities within and between societies, as well as in terms of the inequalities in terms of procedural justice and local participation (Schlosberg &

Collins 2014). Furthermore, it could also re-introduce a sense of politicization and power in the EU conception of adaptation, shifting its emphasis on the responsibility of partner countries in becoming 'resilient' towards a renewed sense of reciprocity in responsibilities. In other words, adaptation should create a joint effort targeting inequalities and injustices influencing climate vulnerability from the international to the local level. This could thus also have repercussions for the EU-side of the equation, creating the need for an introspective exercise vis-à-vis its own policies as an international actor and their influence on the vulnerability of partner countries. For example, some authors have dubbed migration to be a legitimate and effective adaptation strategy of local communities (cf. McLeman & Smit 2006; Scheffran et al. 2012), creating the question whether a formal acknowledgement and strategy regarding climate-induced migration should be pursued in light of EU external adaptation assistance. Moreover, as already discussed in a previous section, the EU should also step up its game in terms of providing adequate climate financing and in ensuring that this financial assistance is new and additional. In sum, acknowledging *reciprocity* in responsibilities for enhancing climate change adaptation in developing countries is key to a balanced discourse in this regard.

Also in terms of concrete policy techniques, more can be done to generate a balanced approach towards adaptation in the context of development. Regarding the GCCA, policy evaluations of its previous phase already revealed that the agency was little engaged with local actors and civil society. While the renewed GCCA+ is pledged to be more open to local actors and concrete strategies in this regard have been announced, they have yet to be issued and implemented. Based on the analysis provided in article 3 and the reflections provided above on the relation between 'scientific' and 'local' knowledge, it is safe to say that the GCCA could benefit from a more 'hybrid' approach towards adaptation assistance and knowledge production, incorporating alternative forms of meaning on vulnerability and adaptation. Indeed, the discursive notion of constructing a 'shared vision' towards climate change adaptation should result in more emphasis on knowledge co-creation within EU policies. This would imply the EU, through agencies like the GCCA, going against the grain of quantification and mutual comparison as primary techniques for monitoring,

evaluation and scaling-up best practices. To propose concrete methods of knowledge co-creation is however still a state-of-the-art topic in academic and policy research alike (for a good introduction, consult Klenk et al. 2017), and therefore far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet, agencies like the GCCA aspiring innovative approaches towards adaptation assistance can be pioneers in this regard, and punch above their weight in terms of supporting transformative approaches.

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# Annex 1: On Foucault and Foreign Policy: the merits of governmentality for the study of EU external relations

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# **On Foucault and Foreign Policy: the merits of governmentality for the study of EU external relations**

## **Abstract**

This paper demonstrates the merits of governmentality as a tool for studying EU external relations. Existing research tends to fall into the trap of reifying the dichotomy between realist and ideational conceptions of EU external action. Governmentality can serve as a hybrid between these two strands of research, incorporating the preoccupation with power of the former with the ethical considerations of the latter. It can open up our understanding of power operating in and through the EU ' s external relations, by looking at the discursive constructions rendering issues governable and the micro-political practices that follow from it. We provide an overview of existing applications of governmentality in EU external relations and construct a framework allowing researchers to use governmentality to its full analytical potential.

**Keywords:** Michel Foucault; governmentality; European Union; external relations; post-structuralism

# 1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) has a wide range of external policies<sup>112</sup>. For its input, it entails a balancing act between EU actors: from the European Commission, over the European External Action Service (EEAS), to the European Parliament and the Member States. The output, among others, is to provide development aid, to set the rules in trade or to combat climate change. For several decades now, scholarship has attempted to address the fundamental question of what kind of power the EU is in the world. Roughly two major strands of literature have developed in this regard: first, classic International Relations (IR) perspectives approached power within EU external relations in a realist or material sense. They focus mainly on the EU's (in)ability to exercise state-like power on the international stage, focusing on coherence between member states, EU presence and actorness in international organizations (cf. Niemann & Bretherton 2013; Thomas 2012). Alternatively, an ideational or value-based conception of the EU as an international actor developed over the years. Most famous in this regard are the role conceptions of the EU as a 'civilian' or 'normative' power (Duchêne 1972; Manners 2002). These concepts focus on the EU's ability to shape 'the normal' on the world stage.

However, this dialectic struggle of interests versus ideas is reaching a dead end as it does not add to our understanding of the EU's external action. As a first contribution, this paper advocates the potential of alternative perspectives to overcome this perpetual distinction. More specifically, we shift the limelight to post-structuralist studies building upon Michel Foucault's views on power and modes of government. By looking specifically at 'the art of government' Foucault identified evolving conceptions on what can be considered good forms of governing, as well as strategies and institutions to pursue this. He labeled these conceptions as mentalities of government or 'governmentalities' and accounted for a more subtle and indirect exercise of power by government in modern society. In short, Foucault described a

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<sup>112</sup> We aim to be consistent in our use of the terms 'external policies' or 'external relations' in order to make clear we discuss a wide range of EU policies with an external dimension. This includes EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, but also, for example, external trade, development and climate change policies.

notion of power that is capillary, relational and productive. Power in a Foucauldian sense is not only capable of operating through coercion or discipline, but also through practices of freedom and self-management (Foucault 1990; 2008). Within EU external relations, governmentality research could function as a 'synthesis' of the ethical considerations rooted in the Normative Power Europe (NPE) approach, and the preoccupation with power of more 'realist' scholarly work.

The second contribution of this paper takes the form of a structured overview of how governmentality has found its entrance in the literature on EU external relations (i.a. Merlingen 2006; 2011; Kurki 2011; Joseph 2014). These studies are promising in terms of rising above the dichotomy of norms versus interests. As we will demonstrate, they re-investigate power in and of role conceptions through a Foucauldian lens, criticize the technicality of EU external governance, and problematize many of the taken-for-granted approaches and concepts in EU external policies. However, we identify several mishaps that make that, in our view, the concept of governmentality has not yet reached its full analytical potential in terms of carving out the power effects rooted in EU governance in third countries. Existing scholarly work resorts too much to 'grand' concepts such as neoliberalism and take this as the starting point, while being less engaged with identifying the intricate and complex interplay of power relations on a truly micro-level scale.

As a third contribution, this paper provides an analytical framework for using governmentality in research in order to give new impetus to its application in the EU external relations literature. At the same time, we want to convince governmentality scholars of the research potential of EU external policies as a site of modern government. Hence, this paper does not provide a new empirical application of governmentality in the context of EU external relations. Rather, we want to stimulate a future research agenda that provides bottom-up analyses of EU external policies. We aim to provide researchers interested in making such empirical contributions with the necessary tools in order to properly do so.

We will start the next section by briefly introducing the conceptual building blocks of governmentality. Subsequently, we will present a concise overview of the existing scholarship on the EU's external relations, structuring it along the lines of a 'normative' and 'realist' angle in the existing body of work. Third, we will provide a review of the current state of governmentality applications that engage with the EU's external policies. Finally, we will present an analytical framework and a research strategy for governmentality applications, in order to motivate a more comprehensive use of governmentality.

## 2. Unpacking governmentality

In this part, we will first discuss the conceptual building blocks of governmentality. These are (1) a broad definition of what is understood as 'government', (2) overarching discursive constructions or rationalities of that government and (3) the translation of these rationalities into concrete micro-practices of governing. Contemporary forms of governmentality are commonly understood as 'the conduct of conduct'. They go beyond both the traditional conception of power as exertion of coercion or force, as well as the traditional tracing of power by looking solely at formal institutions.

Governmentality firstly understands **government** as a plurality of activities aimed at shaping, directing and 'improving' the conduct of others (Rose 1999) and ultimately capable of inducing self-control. By structuring the field of possible action of the governed, there is no need for coercion or violence to exercise power over the individual. If a government is able to define the boundaries in which this individual perceives his or her own possible actions or behavior, he/she will very likely behave in ways that fit the overarching rationality. Governmentality is thus about the indirect exercise of power through determining the 'box' within which individuals believe to have the freedom to think and act (Dean, 2010). Governmentality echoes the Foucauldian conception of power that is diffuse, and produces rather than then represses. It is *diffuse* because it is widely shared by different societal actors. It is *productive* because it is constitutive to truth and to knowledge, which are the basis of our day-to-day functioning (Shiner 1982). Hence, the Foucauldian notion of power is a departure from the more intuitive, liberal conception of power, stating that power is

'possessed' by an actor and exerted over another, with or without this actor's consent (ibid.).

However, this 'box' of governmentality is not infinitely fixed. The diffuse character of power also implies that the act of 'government' cannot be a one-way project. Governmentality emphasizes the agency of governed subjects through resistance or counter-conduct. Resistance is not a reaction to power being exerted on an actor, but an essential element resulting from the relational nature of power within society. As power circulates among societal actors, different forms of it will always well up and influence each other. According to Heller (1996: 99) power and resistance are therefore two different names given to the same capacity, namely the capacity to create social change. They are merely two forms of power influencing each other in what could be considered a dialectical relationship (ibid.). This relational nature of power and resistance generates a notion of government which can be understood as a project of continuous translating and reshaping of governing when met with resistance.

Governmentality reflects a conception of power in which rationalities of government and governmental (micro-) techniques are engaged in constant interplay. As a second feature of governmentality there are the **rationalities** of government that make governing thinkable and therefore possible. They manifest themselves within a discursive framework that renders specific practices meaningful and constructs what and who needs to be governed how (Joseph 2010: 223). This on the one hand creates an intelligible field for intervention. On the other hand, this constitutes a process of problematization, aimed at identifying and describing problems to be rectified while at the same time formulating the appropriated solutions. After the Second World War, Foucault identifies the rise of a neoliberal governmentality, expanding the economic sphere into the social sphere. Rules that applied within economics became the blueprint of human action and even existence itself (Foucault 2008: 242). In contrast to classical liberalism, neoliberal governmentality is not related to reducing state intervention, but to reshaping the state in order to function based on market mechanisms (Joseph 2014; İşleyen 2015b: 675-676). The rationality of market superiority also reshapes the main goal of governmental action, which becomes

providing the legal and regulatory conditions for these economic principles to become the very foundation of individual practices and thought.

The third feature of governmentality is then how it brings together the rationality of government with specific governing **techniques** putting it into action. They are the material sites of the ideas and discourses discussed above (Merlingen 2006; 2011). Such micro-practices can for example be observed in the way in which people are described, targeted, and divided with numbers and statistics in order to substantiate the field for intervention. They can also be identified in practices that turn specific elements of life, such as water or clean air into items for market exchange (cf. Nevins & Peluso 2008). Finally, neoliberal governmentality can also be found in 'improvement' projects built on capacity building of local communities as these become the site for governance (Rose 1999; Li 2011). What these techniques have in common is their technical, depoliticized appearance.

In sum, the act of government can be characterized by a symbiotic relationship between micro-governance techniques and overarching rationalities. On the one hand, governance techniques generate meaning that crystallizes into overarching knowledge systems, representing particular truths or mentalities on how to govern. At the same time, these overarching rationalities legitimize, reproduce and thus perpetuate these particular forms of governmental conduct. Hence, this relationship represents a particularly capillary conception of power. It represents the very fabric of society, originating in the infinitesimal mechanisms of government and clustering into truths that become self-evident and steer governmental action and individual conduct.

### 3. The EU external relations scholarship

After we have introduced the building blocks of governmentality, we direct our attention to how governmentality research can form a bridge between two strands in the literature that are occupied with the question of what power the EU is or can be in the world. Moreover, we bring structure into the body of literature that studies EU external policies from a governmentality angle.

### 3.1 Realist vs. normative power

Although a relatively young discipline, the EU scholarship has produced excellent work to help us understand, explain and evaluate its external policies. Much of the existing scholarly work revolves around the question of precisely what kind of power the EU is on the international stage. First of all, the 'classic' International Relations (IR) perspectives that dominated the early days of the EU external relations literature, interpreted power in a realist or materialist sense. Tracing this line of research back to Bull's (1982) argument for further military integration, these perspectives over the years evolved beyond their initial focus on military power. Scholarly work started to focus on concepts that investigate the conditions for or evaluate the EU's material power. Examples include EU presence (Allen & Smith 1990), actorhood (Niemann & Bretherton 2013) and coherence (Thomas 2012). In addition, Hill (1993) explained the gap between what is expected of the EU in terms of power in the more traditional sense of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its capabilities. Alternatively, Toje (2008) explained the EU's 'ineffective' foreign policy via the concept of a consensus-expectations gap. Arguably, these concepts have a narrow interpretation of power, approaching it from a positivist epistemological position and looking specifically at its institutional sources and material outcomes.

In parallel, different role conceptions emerged challenging these realist interpretations of power. They perceived the EU not as a weaker actor on the international stage, but as a different actor based on values. The idea launched by Duchêne (1972) of a Civilian Power Europe, and more recently Manners' (2002; 2008) notion of a Normative Power Europe generated increasing attention towards the EU's "ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations" (Manners, 2002, p. 239). The 'normal' here is shaped by the EU's identity, based on norms such as rule of law, human rights and democracy. The main contribution of the work by Duchêne and Manners has been to introduce an ideational dimension to the study of the EU external policies; at the time a non-mainstream approach.



However, the NPE argument got more fuzzy through re-interpretation and its theoretical underpinnings overlooked. It became a vehicle for – albeit very good and rigorous – empirical work on policy actions and outcomes, evaluating the EU as conflicted in balancing said norms and material interests (cf. Meunier & Nicolaïdis 2006). EU actors themselves have even justified newly acquired power capabilities by relating them to role concepts such as NPE (Aggestam 2008). Despite the much appreciated focus on the ideational dimension of NPE, what remains under-investigated is the power element: what is ‘power’ in normative power (Sjursen 2006: 238), and how does it operate? It can be an enabling power, altering circumstances for the better. However, normative power can just as well be interpreted as a mechanism for the subordination of others, allowing an arbitrary interpretation of ‘the normal’ (Merlingen 2007). Moreover, even though Manners also aimed to evaluate the norms the EU is projecting, the relationship with power in the transfer of these norms is not fully elaborated.

As an alternative approach to this dichotomy between material and ideational conceptions of EU power, the external governance literature developed as an attempt to pinpoint the EU’s ability to include third countries into common systems of governing and rule without using the ‘carrot’ of membership (Lavenex & Schimmelfenig 2009). It distances itself from ‘realist’ notions of the EU as an external actor by swapping the underlying projection of a unitary state model for a more complexity-sensitive, institutionalist view of policy diffusion and norm transfer beyond EU borders. Hence the focus of much of the literature in this regard is on more gray areas of EU partnerships, such as the European Neighborhood Policy (Lavenex 2008), development cooperation (Slocum-Bradley & Bradley 2010) and democracy promotion (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2011). These empirical settings are scrutinized for their different modes of external governance and the effectiveness of such modes in transferring roles and policy norms.

Although power does play a role in this literature, it is approached only as a condition influencing the effectiveness of EU external governance. In contrast, power effects following from EU external governance schemes tend to be neglected in this approach.

In the following section, we will look into some existing scholarly work that has used a governmentality approach in order to overcome the 'doomed' dichotomy between realism and ideationalism in EU external relations. A governmentality approach can preserve the ethical considerations that are embedded in the NPE concept, while acknowledging the preoccupation of more 'realist' studies with the power effects of EU external policies. The fact that governmentality is based on a Foucauldian concept of power allows for determining how the micro-governance techniques of EU external action crystallize into particular truths and knowledge on how to govern certain issues within EU partner countries. As such, it allows for a critical examination of the EU's external policies, focused on problematizing some of the inherent power elements within seemingly value-based EU actions abroad (see for example Diez 2005).

### **3.2 Governmentality in EU external relations: state of the debate**

Although the current body of literature on the EU's external relations from a governmentality perspective is rather modest in quantity, it is high on quality and already shows promising elements of its added value in terms of rising above the dichotomy between realist and ideational accounts of EU external action.

First of all, a segment of governmentality-inspired studies have tried to pursue this by engaging with the forms of knowledge that emerge as a result of the overarching role conceptions of EU external action, and how these generate real power effects. Merlingen (2007) has proposed the study of the micro-processes in the EU's external policies as a way of problematizing both the norms and power in Normative Power. He advocates a study of the details of a reality usually overlooked by variable-oriented, large-n research (p. 443). For Merlingen said norms can constitute an improvement of life, yet they are also aimed at 'technologizing' life, as they are translated to forms of good governance on the micro-level. Moreover, discourses surrounding these norms hold a risk of epistemic violence with hierarchies of knowing and othering (cf. Diez 2005; Said 1978). This means that the identity of normative power is constructed as a 'self' which at the same time requires an 'other'. This 'other' is presented as different, inferior or even dangerous, and legitimizes an intervention. With regard to power, normative power is an enabling power, one that can alter

circumstances for the better. However, normative power can just as well be interpreted as a mechanism for the subordination of others, allowing an arbitrary interpretation of 'the normal'. Are the norms put forward by the EU universal, or rather a reflection of a Eurocentric view on how the world should be? This is how a governmentality perspective helps to preserve ethical considerations in the study of the EU's external policy, while also critically engaging with power elements reflected in it.

In addition to such overarching questions, research has also used the notion of governmentality to problematize taken-for-granted concepts used in EU external governance, thereby re-inserting the element of power in this branch of the literature. Indeed, governmentality approaches in this regard have done important work in lifting the veil of seemingly neutral, technical and a-political external governance programmes by the Commission. On the one hand, some authors have used a governmentality approach to problematize the broader instances of EU external action, such as EU development cooperation (Hout 2010) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (Merlingen 2011). On the other hand, a growing strand of literature also aims at problematizing more concrete policy concepts within these overarching frameworks, such as EU *democracy* promotion in third countries (Kurki 2011; Malmvig 2014; Tagma et al. 2013), EU *twinning* projects (İşleyen 2015b) and EU *resilience-building* (Joseph 2014).

Despite each of these studies focusing on particular empirical manifestations of EU external action, the power effects that they identify are often very similar. First of all, the local context is redefined as a "problem area in need of rule and improvement" (İşleyen 2015b: 686) that justifies EU intervention. For example, Joseph (2013; 2014) argues that the concept of resilience reflects a world view that highlights contingency, disaster and complexity. Non-resilient countries are expected to suffer more from external shocks, related to ever-growing 'wicked' problems like climate change, environmental degradation, conflict etc. More importantly however, a lack of resilience within particular countries is not understood as caused by worsening external conditions, but rather as the result of internal governance issues. Similarly, in her analysis of EU twinning projects vis-à-vis Egypt and Tunisia, İşleyen (2015b)

identifies that the necessity of twinning is also constructed by identifying a 'problem sphere' of lack of economic and social growth. This is then linked to internal governance issues, which ultimately renders capacity building through twinning as the logical form of EU intervention.

Second, a range of policy techniques is promoted by the EU, which although technical in nature, promote a particular kind of conduct among actors in partner countries. In terms of concrete examples of policy techniques that are problematized, many of the cited studies focus on policies such as benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation schemes, competition-based techniques such as peer review and funding applications, and sharing of information and good practices. In short, such techniques are focused at promoting a form of governance that is calculable, quantifiable and introduces practices of self-monitoring and accountability among targeted actors. The conduct that these policy techniques (re)produce can in most cases be summarized as entrepreneurial, responsible, self-monitoring and overall conducive to EU norms and interests (Kurki 2011; Tagma et al. 2013: 388).

Conceptually, the link to neoliberalism seems almost a given in existing studies, given the apparent dominance of a market logic and responsabilization techniques in EU external governance schemes towards third actors. For example, in her analysis of EU democracy promotion towards the Arab World, Kurki (2011) convincingly shows how EU democracy promotion encourages civil society organizations to pitch themselves as entrepreneurial actors in defense of fundamental freedoms. This matches a competitive market logic and puts the responsibility to reach these goals with civil society organizations themselves. The funding mechanism of the EIDHR is developed accordingly, yet structured and specified by the EU. This puts forward a narrow interpretation of what are considered to be appropriate activities in building democracy. In his analysis of EU assistance for policing in Macedonia, Merlingen (2011) discusses how problems and solutions are constructed through fact-finding missions. These missions overestimate both the available space for reform and the shortfalls of Macedonian policing, while idealizing European best practices. In addition, Merlingen identifies a co-optation of local police staff in their own

governance, as mentees are socialized into a rational-entrepreneurial mindset and self-identify as human capital.

Apart from these 'neoliberal' forms of conduct, EU policy techniques can also have depoliticizing effects for partner actors in targeted countries. A prime example in this regard is the study by İşleyen (2015a) on the EU's seemingly technical and depoliticized approach towards civil society promotion in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Labeled by previous studies on the matter as soft and insignificant (p. 268), İşleyen reinserts a notion of power in the EU's support for civil society organisations in this context. Her research points out that, through micro-governance techniques such as project application and selection and funding conditionalities, the EU limits the possibility for engagement of civil society organizations in political questions that are central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hence, it rules out any kind of transformative role of civil society in conflict reduction and replaces it with a framework of depoliticized activities in which civil societies are expected to operate. In addition, Joseph (2014) points out the depoliticizing tendencies of resilience-building in the context of food crises in the Horn of Africa. As said before, the strong focus on internal governance issues that stand in the way of societies becoming resilient shifts the limelight away from the – often external – causes of problems that leave societies vulnerable to external shocks in the first place. Hence, structural and aggregated causes of external shocks – in which the EU itself also bears responsibility – are erased from the problem definition, and techniques are introduced which make non-resilient countries accountable for their own governance 'failures' in this regard.

In sum, the existing literature showcases a lot of potential in governmentality applications in the study of EU external relations. However, we argue that – despite being very valuable in their own right – the majority of these studies do not utilize the concept of governmentality to its full analytical potential. Theoretically, the dominance of neoliberal governmentality as analytical framework in existing scholarly work generates the risk of it becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Empirically, we clearly identify a concentration of governmentality-inspired studies in certain instances of EU

external relations (e.g. EU democracy promotion) and certain regions (e.g. the Arab world), leaving a lot of unexcavated ground for governmentality research in this context. In the following section, we will therefore further pinpoint some of the issues that exist within the current body of scholarly work, as well as introduce an analytical framework that takes these into account and could inspire future work.

#### **4. A framework for governmentality research in EU external policies**

Above we outlined the contours of governmentality and welcomed it to the study of the external policies of the EU, as it can serve as a bridge between realist and ethical conceptions. Now, we deal with the question of how governmentality research is conducted. To this end we present a framework of guiding questions that highlight the bottom-up, micro-level focused approach that is a governmentality analysis. Moreover, we pay particular attention to what we consider appropriate points of entry and source material while highlighting several good examples.

We would like to argue that transparency on methodological considerations is essential to avoid common misconceptions about governmentality. First, a governmentality analysis does not equal a study of speech or rhetoric. Governmentality scholars have an interest for policy papers or official publications to study not just what is being said, but to investigate how it is possible for this to be said (Foucault as cited in Bacchi & Goodwin 2016: 44). In line with Foucault's own understanding of discourse as the production of knowledge, governmentality analysis thus concerns "bottom-up, micro and fluid relations of truth, power and agency" (Hamilton 2014: 136). Second, researchers should be weary of equating governmentality with neoliberal governance. Otherwise, studies are at risk of becoming a 'self-fulfilling prophecy', in which empirical findings are fitted into pre-constructed subcategories of neoliberalism in order to prove their prevalence (cf. Rothe 2011). Indeed, many existing studies using governmentality in the context of EU external relations base their analysis on a notion of (neo)liberal governmentality (e.g. İşleyen 2015b; Kurki 2011; Tagma et.al. 2013). By limiting themselves conceptually to the study of neoliberal or market-based power effects, such studies are at risk of

turning a blind eye to other forms of power that might be exported and perpetuated through seemingly technical EU external policies. In other words, a study set out to uncover the neoliberal nature of the EU will most likely do just that and will not engage with other 'hidden' effects of EU foreign policy.

In contrast, governmentality research is based on the idea of an 'ascending analysis' building up from the singularity of a detailed case study to more generalizable forms of knowledge (Bröckling et al. 2010: 12; Dean as cited in Oels 2005). This corresponds with the concept of power itself in a Foucauldian sense, which also originates in the infinitesimal mechanisms of government, before crystallizing into specific forms of truth and knowledge which in their turn inform governmental and individual conduct. Hence, a governmentality analysis should have as a starting point the assessment and problematization of these micro-elements in order to provide useful insights on the power effects they generate. We consider the micro-level to be where actors are encouraged or restrained in their actions and decisions. It is the level where Ukrainian civil society actors write funding applications, Ugandan women partake in a workshop on nutrition, or Indonesian forestry officials are at the receiving end of a capacity building project. Governmentality research is thus essentially about mapping a 'grid' of power relations and analyzing power in all its complexity (Death 2013). Ideally, such analyses do not only look into how power operates through practices of freedom – which is usually linked to (neo)liberal governmentality – but look at governmentality as a 'triangle' of three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline<sup>113</sup> and governmental management (Foucault as cited in Rosenow 2009).

The guiding questions presented in table 1 inform a comprehensive framework with three main elements: first, we include the idea of a *genealogy* that represents a form of historical awareness that "denaturalizes norms and ways of life by suggesting that they actually arose out of contingent historical processes" (Bevir 2010: 429). A genealogy of a phenomenon allows for sketching out its historical context in such a

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<sup>113</sup> Sovereign power is power operating through law and violence over a given territory and its subjects. Disciplinary power targets the body in specific and confined settings (e.g. a prison), by employing surveillance and normalizing techniques to produce useful, calculable subjects (Walters & Haahr 2005: 9).

way that its particularity is exposed, in order to de-mystify it as an inevitable evolution. In other words, it approaches the genesis of a particular issue as the product of specific historic ideas and values, thereby revealing its contingency and contestability (ibid.: 431). From a Foucauldian perspective, every part of political life is the product of a historical struggle and social constructions, and should thus be approached a such. It provides a tool for problematizing commonly used concepts in EU external policy discourse, as it requires not only a detailed knowledge of the trajectory that led up to a certain form of governance, but also a problematization of the regimes of practices that shape it. It views such concepts not as technical solutions to technical problems (e.g. resilience) or the natural endpoint of a historical trajectory (e.g. ownership), but the product of (changing) mentalities that inform them.

Second, we also build upon the *analytics of government* approach as developed by Angela Oels (2005). This represents a series of guiding questions that could prove to be beneficial for researchers in their analysis of power effects in both discursive and technical aspects of governance. This particular analytical lens includes questions that are naturally linked to framing and discourse analysis (what problems are formulated? Which elements are obscured in discourse?) as well as questions that touch upon the core of the governmentality concept. These include the formation of identities (what forms and transformations of the self are promoted?), forms of knowledge (which ideas are promoted?) and technical aspects of governance (which instruments, procedures etc. are installed?) (Oels 2005: 189). Merlingen (2011) paid exemplary attention to such questions as he studies what is institutionally considered a powerless actor as the spokesperson for common objectives and projects, and the power that lies therein (p. 162-164). In the same vein, we argue that such constellations of discursive constructions and governance techniques should be perceived as dynamic, constantly changing as a response to changes in their environment.

This is why, thirdly, we also include the *analytics of protest* as developed by Carl Death (2010). What Death brings to the table are the important, yet understudied notions of *counter-conduct* and *resistance*. Although diffuse and difficult to grasp – much like the Foucauldian power concept itself – Death made a rare attempt at translating resistance



to a form in which it can be used for analytical purposes. In his own words, his analytics of protest aims to show “how protest and government are mutually constitutive, and thus how forms of resistance have the potential to reinforce and bolster, as well as and at the same time as, undermining and challenging dominant forms of global governance” (p. 236). It include roughly the same elements as the analytics of government by Oels, such as the fields of visibility, political identities, subjectivities and governance techniques. The main aim of analyzing forms of resistance and counter-conduct is to assess to what extent they bring to the fore new forms of knowledge, truth and conduct, and to what extent they reinforce existing practices and mentalities of government (p. 247). As such, analytics of government and protest are two sides of the same coin, complementary parts of a broader governmentality approach that aims to expose the complexity of power relations in a particular political setting.

However, despite being analytically valuable, Death still conceptualizes resistance mostly in the intuitive sense, based on what would commonly be understood under the idea of ‘protest’ against a particular order. Hence, it is important to reiterate that resistance originates in the relational conception of power in the works of Foucault. Therefore, resistance can also be found in actions that are not explicitly rallying ‘against’ a particular mode of governance, but instead instrumentalize some of the existing mentalities and techniques of governance in order to oppose them. Malmvig (2014) provides the example of political reform in the context of EU democracy promotion towards the Arab World. Drawing on Baudrillard’s insights on simulated reality, she argues that Arab countries subverted the logic of political reform by the EU by simulating it to the point where real reform could no longer be distinguished from the simulated variant. This is just one example of a form of counter-conduct which is much more subtle and indirect in its attempts to direct social change away from dominant political mentalities and governance techniques. Hence, although analytically challenging, researchers should also attempt at identifying these more hidden forms of counter-conduct.

Finally, we also include the principle of an *ascending analysis* in our analytical framework. As we have explained above, this is needed to prevent researchers from putting the cart before the horse and basing their analytical delineation of governmentality on an – often narrow – notion of (neo)liberal governmentality. Importantly, this does not mean that traces of neoliberal governmentality cannot be the result of a governmentality analysis. However “by constituting an external and supposedly omnipresent neoliberalism, we neglect internal constitution, local variability, and the role that ‘the social’ and individual agency play in (re)producing, facilitating, and circulating neoliberalism” (Springer 2012: 135). Moreover, researchers should avoid searching *only* for traces of neoliberal governmentality in order not to limit the analytical potential of the governmentality concept.

Table 7: Four analytical dimensions of governmentality analysis (dimension 2 is based on Dean 2010 & Oels 2005: 189; dimension 3 is based on Death 2010)

No.	ANALYTICAL DIMENSION	SUBDIMENSION	GUIDING QUESTIONS
1	Genealogy	N/A	What is the historic trajectory that lead to this form of governmentality?
2	Analytics of government	Fields of visibility	What is illuminated, what obscured? What problems are to be solved?
		Forms of knowledge	Which forms of thought arise from and inform the activity of governing?
		Formation of identities	What forms of self are presupposed by practices of government? Which transformations are sought?
		Technical aspects	By what instruments, procedures and technologies is rule accomplished?
3	Analytics of protest	Fields of visibility	What is illuminated, what obscured? How does this contest/reinforce power effects rooted in dominant mentalities and governmental conduct?
		Forms of knowledge	Which forms of thought arise from and inform the activity of dissent/protest? How does this contest/reinforce power effects rooted in dominant mentalities and governmental conduct?
		Formation of identities	What new identities/subjectivities emerge from the observed activities of dissent/protest. How does this contest/reinforce power effects rooted in dominant mentalities and governmental conduct?
		Technical aspects	What techniques are employed by the observed activities of dissent/protest? How does this contest/reinforce power effects rooted in dominant mentalities and governmental conduct?
4	Ascending analysis	N/A	To which overarching concepts can this local manifestation of governmentality be linked?

A governmentality study combines textual analysis of constituting discourses with an intimate knowledge of micro-political arrangements, while also connecting the dots between them. Firstly, discourse should be approached as capable of shaping, supporting and reproducing local power constellations around a certain form of governance. Textual analysis – looking specifically at emphases, fabrications and interpretations – of ‘practical texts’ such as policy documents or action programmes can be used in order to uncover such overarching rationalities of government (Walters & Haahr 2005: 7). This should however not be stand-alone project. Secondly, micro-level case studies through a thorough document analysis, process-tracing and field/ethnographic work reveal the material effects of governmental techniques and micro-practices, and take an interest in the attempts to contest or escape these. For example, participatory observation in an EU institution reveals the mundane and the day-to-day of governing, while it also allows to investigate the shapes of counter-conduct. Malmvig (2014) is a good example of the diversity in source material going from public documents, including speeches and Web sites, to interviews and direct involvement in multilateral initiatives in her study of EU democracy promotion in the Arab world and the resistance it faces. In sum, a thorough governmentality analysis generates a detailed and complex understanding of the project of government in a specific micro-setting, paying particular attention to the mutual interdependence of power, freedom and resistance (Death 2010: 239).

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

This paper demonstrated the merits of a governmentality approach in order to escape the dichotomy between realist and ideational perspectives on EU external relations. Governmentality can preserve the ethical and critical underpinnings of the work on NPE, while also maintaining the sensitivity for power that is apparent in much of the realist-inspired literature. Through its focus on how power operates through technical aspects of governance, it can also re-insert a notion of power in the EU external governance literature. Existing scholarly work in this regard already demonstrates that using governmentality to problematize some of the discursive constructions and technical aspects surrounding EU external policies has the potential of generating new

and interesting insights. However, the existing literature is still limited and the analytical potential of using a governmentality approach in this regard has not yet reached its full potential. By providing an analytical framework and some inspiration for further research, we hope to invoke new scholarly work in order to strengthen governmentality research as a fully-fledged alternative for studying EU external relations.

We also want to emphasize that empirical instances within the realm of EU external relations are highly interesting sites for research for governmentality scholars, as they have the potential to move the concept into new and uncharted territory. Using governmentality for the study of EU external relations can move its use beyond the European nation state, as was the main delineation in Foucault's own work. Governmentality in Foucault's writings is a way of tracing different mentalities of government from the Middle Ages onwards, arriving at the then contemporary forms of neoliberal governmentality. Arguably, the governing forms apparent in different domains of EU governance provide new and interesting cases to see how different forms of power interrelate in *sui generis* international organisations that operate beyond the nation state, combining complex forms of supranational and intergovernmental policy making.

Moreover, as the external governance literature rightfully argues, the EU's way of exporting its norms and rules beyond its own borders without dangling the 'carrot' of membership is in itself an interesting research topic. It can be considered a contemporary form of 'international governmentality', targeting the conduct of conduct of partner states and (non-)governmental actors within them. While some have questioned the usefulness of governmentality on an international scale (cf. Joseph 2009), we argue that the rise of transnational, complex and 'wicked' problems like climate change and environmental degradation increasingly lift 'the art of governing' to the international and transnational level. Hence, governmentality research should follow suit, attempting to understand these new international mentalities of government. There is no doubt that the study of EU external relations would be a highly promising research agenda in this regard.

Finally, governmentality research could also function as a much needed lever for promoting interdisciplinary research within EU studies. Due to its strong preoccupation with power encapsulated in the technical aspects of governing, governmentality research requires empirical data that could potentially be highly specialized and opaque for non-specialized scholars. For example, EU scholars interested in studying governmentality within the EUs external environmental governance could more easily delve into the empirics when collaborating with scholars specialized in the technical aspects of environmental management. Governmentality research could thus invoke new and interesting research collaborations, which in their turn could greatly enhance our knowledge of the micro-political arrangements that constitute EU external policies.

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## Annex 2: Individual contribution to the research articles

- **Article 1:** I took the lead in the research process, from writing the first version up until the end of the review process. Prof. Orbie contributed intellectually through numerous discussions on the topic and was closely involved during both the writing and review process by providing valuable input and providing extensive feedback on different versions of the paper. Dr. Delputte was mainly involved by discussing the paper during the early stages of the writing process and by co-authoring two conference papers that eventually lead up to this publication. She was also responsible for gathering some of the data presented in this paper.
- **Article 2:** I took the lead in the research process, from writing the first version up until the end of the review process. Both co-authors were equally involved by discussing the paper with me on numerous occasions, which helped considerably in terms of shaping and formulating the main argument of the paper. Moreover, they also provided extensive feedback on different versions of the paper.
- **Annex 1:** Marjolein and I have played an equal part in contemplating and writing this theoretical piece. This paper through numerous discussions and through a joint writing process. We are also currently both engaged in the review process.